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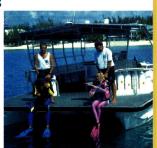
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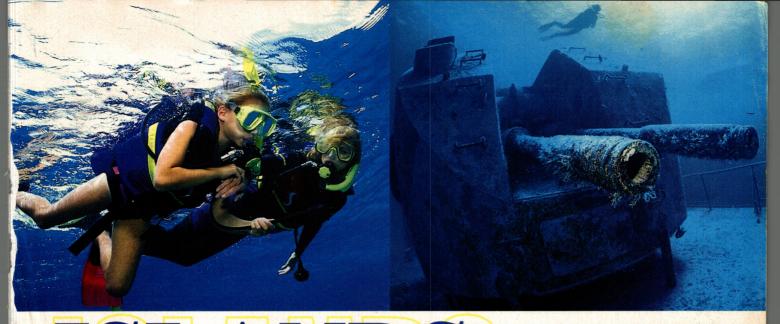




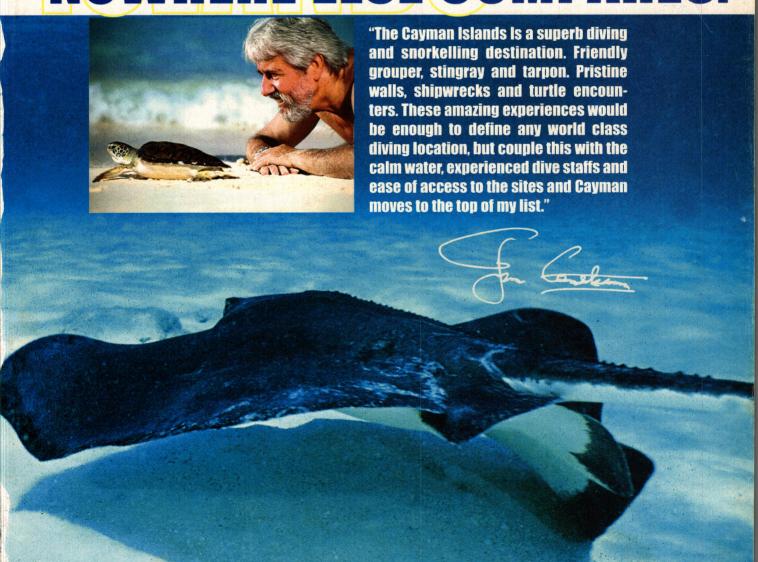


FIFE CAYMAN





ISLANDS NOWHERE ELSE COMPARES.







By David Taylor



Poll Positions

You are cordially invited to the world's largest dive party.

www.scubadiving.com's

"Internet tribe" bangs

the drum daily to a

steady beat of

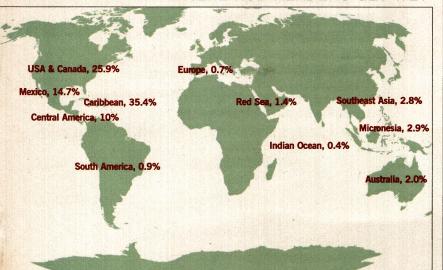
knowledge.

In this Age of Connectivity, when every human on Earth has the potential to be connected to every other human, one of the most important events has been the creation of online communities that span any boundary you can think of.

One of the more intense of these "Internet tribes" can be found beating the drum daily on scubadiving.com's message board, where we receive an average of 600 posts per day. It's really more like a 24-hour live chat with divers around the world, where you can post a question, hit reload, then, literally, watch the responses come in.

Dive the World

WHERE RSD READERS GET WET



I plead guilty to spending too much time there each day, but it's really like being at a huge party with dozens of fascinating conversations going on at once. One of the features I'm most addicted to is the many polls taken every day, from "What's the weirdest thing you've found while diving?" to Friday's inevitable "Where's everyone diving this weekend?" They're a great finger on the pulse of divers worldwide, a fertile breeding ground for ideas and a steady source of knowledge for me. You're cordially invited.

E-PINIONS

POLL RESULTS FROM SCUBADIVING.COM'S DIVER-TO-DIVER MESSAGE BOARD

DEATH OF THE SNORKEL?

Do you wear a snorkel when diving?

Never														55%
Sometimes.		20.00				20.00						100		25%
Always					9		9			1			ř.	20%

- ⇒ "Won't dive without one." Cheesehead
- ⇒ "It's on the boat in case a dolphin or whale shark shows up." Deia
- ⇒ "I saw mine a few years ago . . . just can't remember where." Max Bottomtime

HOW HONEST ARE YOU?

To avoid extra charges, would you lie to airlines if they asked about dive gear?

Yes.													No.	80%
No.										300	13.00			20%

- ⇒ "In a New York minute." DocVikingo
- ⇒ "In a Cincinnati second." Marc2
- ⇒ "Dive gear? What dive gear?" ftlaud_john

DO YOU LOG YOUR DIVES?

How detailed are your logbook entries?

High detail	6
Medium detail	0
Low detail	0
Depends on dive	0
Don't log	

Also in this issue is the mother of all diver polls, our annual Top 100 Readers' Choice Awards. More than 6,000 divers filled out forms online and offline. The results provide a fascinating snapshot of what our readers found to be the best out there: destinations, operators, fish life, and about 20 other categories that put you in the pole position when it comes to finding the diving you crave—and deserve.



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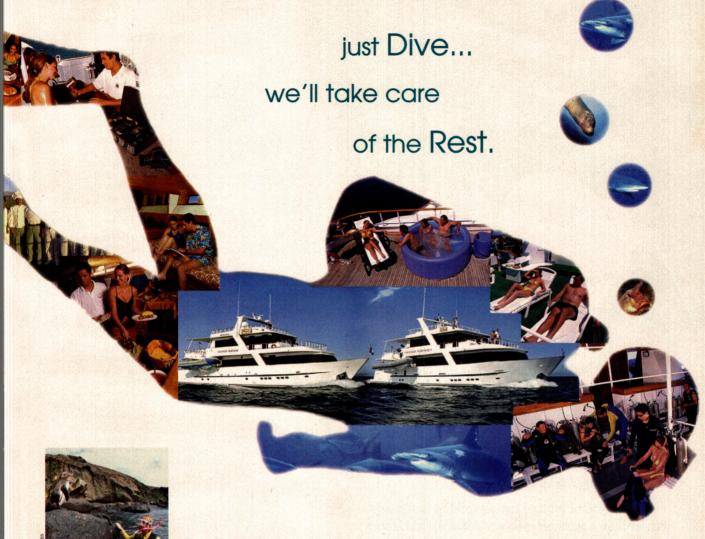
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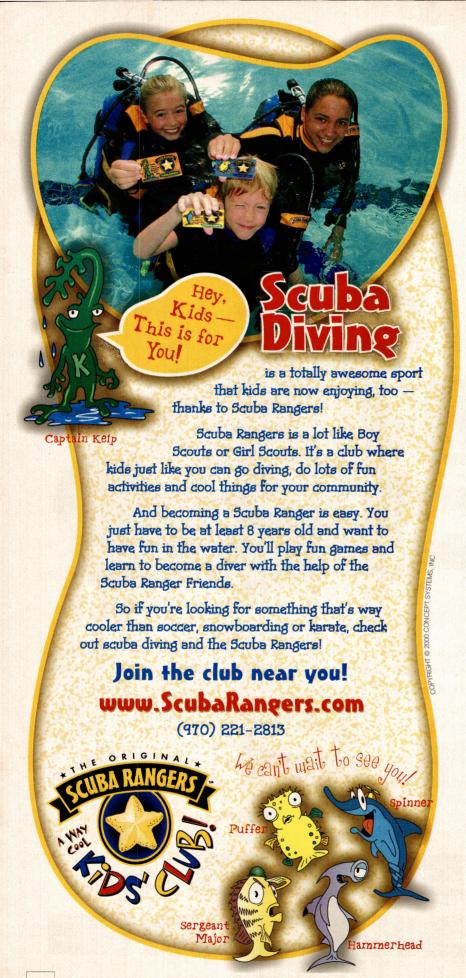




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Preferred film

MX-5: Under \$200





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photo: Joe Hall

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A RODALE PUBLICATION

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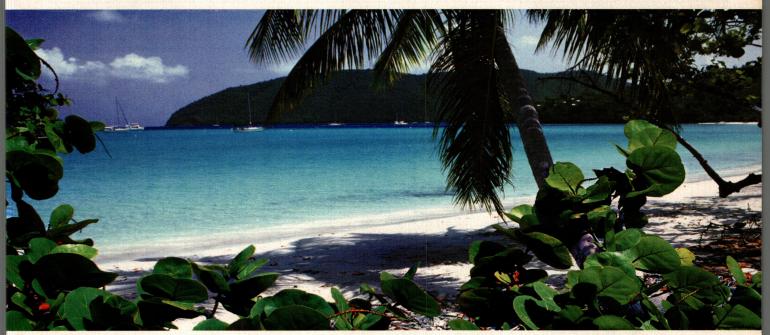
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Just a reminder. Eventually you'll have to come up for air.



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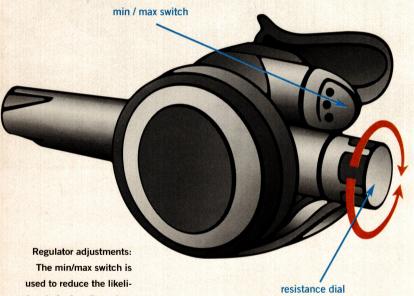
We're here to make your diving better, safer and more fun.

EQUIPMENT

Regulator Adjustments— What to Look For

I'm about to buy my first regulator, but I'm confused. What adjustments should I look for?

🚼 via e-mail



The min/max switch is used to reduce the likelihood of a free-flow when the regulator is out of your mouth. The resistance dial is used to reduce the effort it takes to start the flow of air

Most high-performance regulators have one or two divercontrolled adjustments on the second stage. These adjustments are of two types:

⇒ Resistance dials. They change the effort needed to start inhalation by changing the tension on a spring. These dials are almost all located in the same position (left side of the second stage) and function in the same direction (a

QUICK TIP

from the regulator.

I was told that if I'm ever in an out-of-air situation to keep my regulator in my mouth during my ascent. Why?

OUR RECOMMENDATION

First, more air may become available as you ascend. But even if you're forced to make a real out-of-air emergency ascent, keeping your reg in your mouth will keep water out of your mouth, help you maintain control and give you psychological security.

QUITCK TIP

I need some tricks to get into my 6.5 mm wetsuit.

OUR RECOMMENDATION

KYJelly or this less expensive concoction: Mix one-half inexpensive hair conditioner and one-half water and then apply the mixture either to your skin or in the suit, especially at wrists and ankles.

clockwise turn toward the diver increases breathing resistance).

⇒ Min/max switches. These are used primarily to reduce the likelihood of a free-flow when the regulator is out of your mouth. Although manufacturers have clever names for these devices and claim they are "venturi assists to boost performance," they are actually a small piece of plastic used to restrict the flow of air, interrupting the venturi already designed into the reg.

Advocates of adjustable regulators cite reduced likelihood of the regulator taking a "set" and going out of specs between servicing, plus the ability to adjust to optimum performance as conditions change. Those who prefer no adjustments cite simplicity, ease of use and continuous high performance without the need to adjust as advantages.

SAFETY

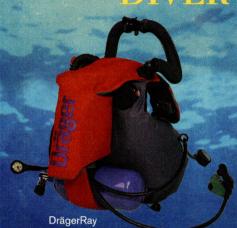
Can Cold Water Cause Shortness of Breath?

I did my fourth open-water certification dive in a quarry with a thermocline. At 40 feet (below the thermocline), I removed my mask and did the mask-clearing exercise. I experienced shortness of breath and had to surface after completing the exercise. Was my reaction to the 55-degree water normal for my fourth dive, or was it because I was nervous?

Ken M., Chicago, Ill.

It was most likely a little of both. Sudden facial contact with cold water (below 70 degrees) prompts the mammalian diving reflex. It's what occurs when you dive into a pool on a sunny day expecting warm water and instead find cold: You experience an involuntary gasp or reflexive sucking in of air. Your body is trying to expand oxygen

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Tel: 727-578-9610 Fax: 727-578-6480 intake rapidly. This diving reflex is the body's way of conserving what little oxygen remains in the blood so that it gets transported to the brain. Even good swimmers and experienced divers can experience shortness of breath or suck water into their respiratory system in these situations.

SAFETY

Once I've Surfaced, Can I Descend To Make a Safety Stop?

Recently, I made a dive to 90 feet. The vis was bad and I had to surface to see where the boat was. Should I have descended again to do a safety stop?

Mark Wulfekotte, Greenwood, S.C.

The best thinking about decompression is that going back down to make your safety stop will make little difference. On the other hand, going back down to 15 feet after you've surfaced won't do any harm, either. In fact, there's a good reason for going back down to 15 feet

once you've found the boat, especially if the boat is a good distance away—you can swim much more efficiently under water than you can on the surface because your fins work best when fully submerged.

If you find yourself in this situation again, the best procedure would be to make your safety stop before you surface to find the boat. If you find the boat to be a considerable distance away, take a compass heading and go back down to 15 feet to swim to the boat.

Low on Air: Should I Have Aborted This Dive?

On my third dive after certification all was going well. I signaled my dad that I had 800 psi left and he gave me the OK signal. The two of us then swam to our guide and signaled him. He gave us the OK and continued to go in the direction he was headed. When I was at 500 psi and about to get the hell out of there, our guide finally led us back. My dad had us ascend to 15 feet so that

the swim back could do double duty as a safety stop.

Should my dad and I have turned back after signaling to the guide or should we have waited for him? After looking back, I realize how serious the situation was. And should I have told the operator about the situation?

Kevin McClure, North Canton, Ohio

You did the right thing. By immediately ascending to 15 feet, you not only performed your safety stop, you conserved air by moving shallower.

It is possible that the divemaster had an environmental reason for not ascending immediately—perhaps boat traffic or surface current—but he should have communicated that to you. In any event, definitely talk to the dive operator. That way, you'd know if there was some problem the dive guide was helping you avoid. If this was a careless and negligent incident, the operator definitely needs to be made aware of it.

"Best of the Best"... Again!

WHAT THE PUBLICATIONS ARE SAYING WORLDWIDE...

RODALE'S SCUBA DIVING MAGAZINE REGULATORS IN REVIEW

"These new regulators from Atomic Aquatics were **this test's showstoppers**. The T1/Ti2 with titanium first and second-stages, is not only the lightest regulator we've ever tested; it also received the **best scores** on both the breathing simulator and the ocean ergonomic tests **of any regulator we've ever tested.**"

RODALE'S SCUBA DIVING MAGAZINE BEST OF THE BEST IN REVIEW

"When the objective lab scores and the subjective ocean scores are combined, the Atomic Aquatics regulators come out **number one.**"

UNTERWASSER MAGAZINE,

GERMANY "Solid, compact size, unique material, and last but not least the most extensive warranty make the T1 Ti2 the best regulator UNTERWASSER has tested to date."

TAUCHEN MAGAZINE, GERMANY

"The Atomic Aquatics regulator sets **a new standard** for performance, quality and workmanship."





EQUIPMENT

How Do I Keep My Gear From Being Stolen?

When traveling with dive gear and backpacks in the South Pacific, what precautions do you recommend to prevent being ripped off? We want to travel light and keep our gear safe when not diving.

Niels Maumenee, Baltimore, Md.

We've often been faced with the "what to do with my stuff" dilemma while out of the room or diving. Here are a few tips:

⇒ One of the best bags we've found to keep stuff safe in is a military-style duffel bag. It's top-loading, making it easy to get stuff out of. All the cover flaps fold down and come together onto a central loop, which, when you run a lock through it, prevents the flaps from opening. The bag itself is made of high-impact nylon, and the handles are multi-stitched. A small locked cable can be used to lock the bag to a permanent fixture in the room like pipes, toilet, etc.

⇒ Keep camera gear in hard Pelican cases. You can use two locks on each Pelican case. When diving, put valuables in the case and use the locking cable to secure it.

⇒ If the hotel has a safe, use it. If not, take small valuables such as passport, traveler's checks, cash, ID and airline tickets with you wherever you go.

Incidentally, you'll find the people of the South Pacific to be very friendly, honest and

like a porthole or anchor, this increases the weight they are carrying even more.

⇒ If a tech diver ever needs to assist a buddy, the additional weight will require more buoyancy.

⇒ Tech BCs are often redundant—e.g., two air cells, each with 45 pounds of lift. If one of the air cells on the BC tears or loses its ability to hold air, the diver would still have enough lift in the remaining air cell.

EQUIPMENT

Why Does a Tech Diver Need Extra Lift?

Can you please give me the logical reasons why a tech diver would need 45-plus pounds of lift?

₩ via e-mail

- ⇒ Tech divers often carry heavy equipment, like multiple scuba tanks and tools, making them very negatively buoyant.
- ⇒ If their objective is to recover something,

Our Readers Come First

We'd love to hear from you. Please write to Rodale's Scuba Diving, 6600 Abercorn St., Suite 208, Savannah, GA 31405. E-mail us at edit@scubadiving.com. You can submit questions via our web sites: www.scubadiving.com/askanexpert or www.newdiver.com/forum/askanexpert. Please include your name, address and daytime telephone number. We try to respond to all questions, either here or directly to you.

"Split fins win"... Again!

ATOMIC AQUATICS SplitFin #1 rated in Fins In Review May 2000

"In the second part of its report on new fins, ScubaLab tests show that SPLIT FINS win again.

he new millennium has certainly arrived for scuba fins. Nature's Wing split-fin propeller technology has again proven its superiority where it counts the most—efficiency. Put simply, the split-fin technology requires less effort than conventional paddle technology, and the

RODALE'S SCUBA DIVING MAGAZINE

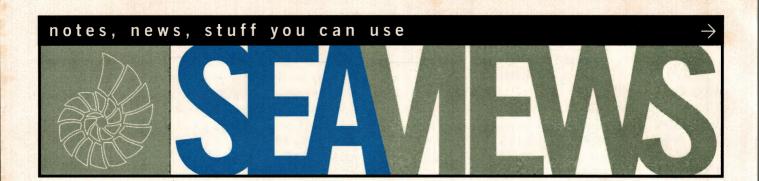
diver uses less air."

ATOMIC AQUATICS, INC. The Atomic Aquatics SplitFin,

a radical new approach to diver propulsion.
With the slightest kick, the split blade deflects to form a pair of wings that slice through the water reducing drag and creating lift in the forward direction, propelling the diver ahead. Compared to conventional fins, the split fin demands less effort, stress, and strain resulting in greater sustained speed, power and comfort. Independent testing has shown that this technology can significantly reduce air consumption.



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HISTORY

WHO'S WHO IN DIVING

Inside: 10 tips to reduce drag, pg. 18; Belize dive shops are back in business after Hurricane Keith, pg. 20. While not all are household names, the 19 inaugural inductees into Grand Cayman's INTERNATIONAL SCUBA DIVING HALL OF FAME are more than worthy of the honor. These pioneers, who brought the infant sport of scuba to millions, were honored for their work at a gala ceremony this past fall. In alphabetical order they are:

LLOYD BRIDGES. Star of the *Sea Hunt* television series, Bridges turned a generation of childhood dreamers into scuba divers by showing us that we could breathe under water and have grand adventures. JACQUES-YVES COUSTEAU. No surprise here. Inventing the aqua-lung alone would qualify Capt. Cousteau for inclusion, but as most divers know, he dedicated his entire life to exploring and protecting the underwater world. Much of the world knows about the beauty

DR. SYLVIA EARLE. An aquanaut and deep dive record holder with more than 6,000 hours under water, marine biologist Sylvia Earle is one of the world's leading advocates of marine ecology and environmental protection.

BERNARD EATON. Co-founder of the British Sub-Aqua Club, Eaton has had a distinguished career as the publisher of the UK's largest dive magazine.

EMILE GAGNAN. An engineer at Air Liquide in France in 1943, Gagnan helped a young Cousteau perfect the aqua-lung.

AL GIDDINGS. A distinguished underwater photographer and cinematographer, with impressive credits including *The Deep*, Bond classics *For Your Eyes Only* and *Never Say Never Again*, as well as the blockbuster *Titanic*, and several IMAX and HDTV projects.

HANS AND LOTTE HASS. This husband-and-wife team pioneered underwater photography, crafting their own camera housings and techniques, long before photography became popular or easy.

JACK LAVANCHY. Lavanchy was an importer of dive equipment in Switzerland, and went on to direct PADI Europe.

JACK MCKENNEY. From his early years as a dive guide at UNEXSO in the 1960s, through his impressive career as an underwater photographer, cinematographer and magazine editor, McKenney personified dive adventure and creative vision.

BOB SOTO. A true visionary in destination dive travel, Soto built the Caribbean's first dive shop on Grand Cayman in 1957.

RON AND VALERIE TAYLOR. This Australian husband-andwife team have done more to debunk myths about the dangers of sharks than anyone. They remain ardent marine conservationists and active filmmakers today.

ALBERT TILLMAN. Designed and founded the first organized instructor certification agency in Los Angeles County, and went on to found the National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI). Among his other accomplishments, he was a founder of UNEXSO in the early 1960s.

STAN WATERMAN. An eloquent public speaker and talented cinematographer, Waterman has filmed and produced scores of underwater documentaries and feature films.

—STEPHEN FRINK



At the black-tie induction ceremony, honorees Al Giddings (left), Ben Cropp (second from left) and Bob Soto (far right) are congratulated by industry leaders including Jean-Michel Cousteau, who sits on the ISDHF's board of directors.

of the sea as a direct result of his television specials and books.

BEN CROPP. A former champion spearfisherman, Cropp traded his speargun for a camera in 1962 and went on to become a world-renowned underwater cinematographer and still photographer.

E.R. CROSS. A former Navy diver and dive shop owner, Cross went on to make significant contributions to the field of diver safety with his voluminous research and writing.

DR. JEFFERSON C. DAVIS, JR. Davis was one of the foremost authorities on hyperbaric medicine and pioneered decompression sickness treatments.

GUSTAV DELLA VALLE. Born in northern Italy, Della Valle was one of the early dive equipment importers, first representing Cressisub and then creating the Scubapro line.

NEWS

FOR THE

INDUSTRY

Follow the action to **Booth 2343!**

There'll be a frenzy of fish at Booth 2343! What do we mean? Stop by and find out. There'll be prizes for everyone who *dives* in.

> Also, on Thursday and Friday (1/25 and 1/26) from 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., RSD photo editor, Stephen Frink, will sign 2001 calendars featuring his work. (First come, first served.)

And don't miss the popular seminars presented by Rodale's Scuba Diving and Rodale's ScubaLabTM. The schedule is as follows:



Wed, Jan 24 2:00-3:00 p.m. ScubaLab™ Report on Fins

Thurs, Jan 25 2:00-3:00 p.m. ScubaLab™ Report on Regulators

Friday, Jan 26 2:00-3:00 p.m. ScubaLab™ Report on Dive Computers

Friday, Jan 26 3:00-4:00 p.m. E-Mail Marketing for the Dive Industry

Dear Industry Partner,

Here is some great advice from Harry Beckwith's book, Selling the Invisible.

TELL PEOPLE - IN A SINGLE COMPELLING SENTENCE - WHY THEY SHOULD BUY FROM YOU INSTEAD OF SOMEONE ELSE.

In the spirit of helping you develop your sentence, I'll provide you with our ad sales slogan.

"Advertise in Rodale's Scuba Diving because we generate more response than any other dive publication."

I encourage you to come up with a simple sentence for your company. In fact, if you do and send me a copy, we'll print it in Rodale's Scuba Diving EXTRA. (E-mail it to me by March 1, 2001: dfarnum@scubadiving.com)

Have you heard about RSD's FREE e-mail newsletter for dive industry professionals? It's called Bottom Time, and if you don't receive it but would like to, send an e-mail today to tgibbs@scubadiving.com.

Dane B. Farnum, Publisher

CIUNE THE

Scenes from Scuba Extasea in Denver!



RSD Ad Director Debbie Edwards with William Cline of the Cline Group and Scott Dawson of SCUBAPRO



RSD's Sharon Mariner with Adrienne Brown, Linda Leszynski and Angela Glass of Tropical Adventures



A great turnout at the Internet seminar Rodale's Scuba Diving



Darien Bacon and Brett Landry of Aggressor Fleet



Mares rep Eric Yester with Sharon of Rodale's Scuba Diving



RSD's Andrew Wiens **Brad Lally**





Ocean Divers with RSD's Travis Gainsley

OCEAN DIVERS



Ron Stevens of Mike Ball Dive expeditions with Debbie Edwards



Dive Tours' Veronica Guevara and Martha Paredes with Sharon



and Martha Paredes of Del Mar Aquatic and Martha Paredes of Del Mar Group with Sharon Mariner and Laura C.S. Walker of Rodale's Scuba Diving

RSD Hosts Equipment Manufacturers





Thanks to the following companies for participating in a recent Rodale's ScubaLab™ and internet seminar held in Orange County, CA: Aqua Lung, Atomic Aquatics, Cressi-sub, Dacor, Drager Safety, DUI, IDI, Liberty Group, Mares and Scubapro

Ready to Dive!

Phil San Filippo of the Cayman Islands **Department of Tourism** got his entire family certified to dive this past summer. Pictured here: Phil, his wife Marsha, the two dive instructors, and sons J.T. and Danny.



A good ol' western breakfast!



Debbie Edwards at the Village Inn in Casper, Wyoming with Clay McCardell of **Explorer Ventures**



At a cocktail reception in Southern California hosted by Fiji Visitors **Bureau and Air Pacific** Mike McQuay, CEO of Air Pacific, Damend Gounder of Fiji's Tourism Action Committee, and Michael Londregan, Regional Director Americas of Air Pacific. Right: Joe Turmoto of the Fiji Visitor's Bureau

Celebrating Fiji!



Announcing the 2001 Bonaire Dive Festival

t's more than a dive festival, it's a celebration! June 9-16, 2001, Bonaire will host the 5th Annual Bonaire Dive Festival sponsored by the Tourism Corporation of Bonaire, CORAL, *Rodale's Scuba Diving*, Air Jamaica and the Center for Marine Conservation.



Call now for the best package rates and an early registration fee of only \$75. At the festival, you'll join world-renowned marine biologists, underwater photographers and conservation experts for a celebration of the well-protected reefs on Bonaire. You'll spend your days diving the exquisite reefs of the Bonaire Marine Park and your nights at parties and seminars, finding the answers to the mysteries of life underwater. 1-800-BONAIRE, 1-888-CORAL REEF





SSI Adopts Risk Awareness For Children

Diving is getting much younger these days with the infusion of children's programs into the sport. All children's diving programs have a similar theme, "have fun and stay safe." But until now, no certification organization has formally addressed the challenge of informing parents about the risks to children involved in water activities.

Enter the Risk Awareness for Children program consisting of a short video and accompanying parental statement. Risk Awareness for Children is available to the entire industry regardless of certification agency affiliation.

The 6 1/2-minute video is targeted to an 8-11 year old child's level of understanding and attention. It does a very good job of addressing risks associated with kids' water activities. The accompanying Parental Statement is similar to standard diving waivers and releases in that it is intended to transfer responsibility to parents for making appropriate decisions in regards to the participation of their children in water activities.

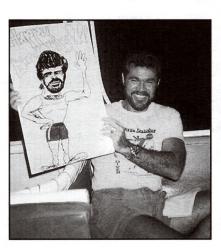
Scuba Schools International has adopted the Risk Awareness for Children program and will use it for their Scuba Ranger, Passport Diver and Junior Open Water Diver programs.

970-482-0883

Peter Hughes Announces \$25,000 Giveaway in Honor of 10th Anniversary

en years ago, Peter Hughes bought his first live-aboard, *Sea Dancer*, and began his tradition of quality boats and excellent customer service. Today, Peter owns seven luxury live-aboards worldwide and one land-based operation in Curaçao.

Peter Hughes Diving is celebrating its 10th anniversary with a \$25,000 giveaway. Win a \$10,000 or \$5,000 gift cer-



tificate or one of the 10 one-week trips being given away. Each time you travel with Peter Hughes in 2001, your name will be entered into a drawing for one of these prizes.

Call 1-800-9 DANCER for more information or stop by their booth at DEMA.

RSD's EXTRA is distributed to our exclusive list of more than 10,000 people affiliated with the dive industry. Send your trade news to: RODALE'S SCUBA DIVING EXTRA, 6600 Abercorn Street, Suite 208, Savannah, Ga 31405. E-mail: ssmith@scubadiving.com

Shorties & Specials

- Paul Watters has joined Little Cayman Beach Pead Sail Sports announces the promotion of Paul Resort as the new General Manager. Paul has worked in many facets of the travel and tourism industry at various hotels, most recently at the Grand Cayman Marriott Beach Resort Welcome Paul! 800-327-3835
- And welcome to Cobalt Coast Resort & Suites. Grand Cayman's newest luxury hotel. This unique property is located on the Northwest shore of Boatswains Bay. It features 18 guest rooms, suites and villas, a specialty restaurant and bar, freshwater pool and jacuzzi and a full-service on-site dive center operated by DIVETECH. 800-992-2015, www.cobaltcoast.com
- Divi Resorts has appointed Deborah Bodden as General Manager of Divi Tiara Beach Resort in Cayman Brac. A native of the Cayman Islands and a veteran hotelier with more than fifteen years experience, Ms. Bodden most recently served as General Manager of Morritt's Tortuga Club & Resort in Grand Cayman. 800-367-3484
- Island Air, the Sister Islands air transport carrier, has launched its new Online Reservation web site at www.IslandAirCayman.com to simplify their passengers' ability to make reservations. 345-949-5252
- Congratulations to Drew Richardson, Senior Vice President of Training, Education, Membership and Envi-Lang both received the Craig Hoffman Memorial Award from the Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society.
- The Boston Sea Rovers is sponsoring their 47th Annual Underwater Clinic, March 3-4, 2001 at the Copley Plaza, St. James Avenue, Boston. Features of the clinic include 40 seminars, a dozen detailed workshops, an evening film festival and over 60 display booths. 617-424-9899, www.searovers.org
- The 25th **Beneath the Sea** exposition will be held March 23-25, 2001 at the Meadowlands Exposition Center in Secaucus, New Jersey. 800-536-EXPO, www.BeneathTheSea.org

- Lusk, Red Sail Sports' Chief Financial Officer, to the position of Chief Operating Officer for Red Sail Sports. Paul has been with Red Sail from the beginning and has proven himself to be an invaluable member of the executive team. 415-981-4411
- Condolences to the Aqua-Trek family on the passing of long-time employee, Apisai Bati. Api died of a heart attack at the age of 50. He was Agua-Trek Mana's famous "Sharkman" and head divemaster. Divers from all over the world traveled to Fiji to witness Api's amazing relationship with the sharks at the Mana Island "Supermarket" dive site.
- Scuba diving cruises to the remote Bahama Out Islands on the new luxury live-aboard dive vessel, Aqua Cat, are set to begin July 2001. The Aqua Cat will depart from Nassau, Bahamas each Saturday for an 8-day, 7night diving adventure in the remote islands of the Exumas. 888-327-9600, www.aquacatcruises.com
- ► The Ford Seahorses Scuba Diving Club announces the 24th Annual Great Lakes Shipwreck Festival, February 17, 2001. The Festival consists of multimedia presentations of diving discoveries in fresh and salt water as well as seminars. Photo contest rules will also be announced. 734-769-2458, www.fordseahorses.org
- ronment for PADI Worldwide. Richardson and Michael PON September 7, 2000, Red Sea live-aboard owner Capt. Ramy Refaat signed a franchise agreement for the *Red Sea Aggressor*, making it the newest member of Aggressor's world-wide fleet of scuba diving yachts. Capt. Ramy's boat, previously named the M/V Excel, has been operating for over a year as an Aggressorapproved vessel, but the two parties wanted to make the relationship permanent with the franchise agreement signing. 800-348-2628, www.aggressor.com

Profile

Rod McDowall of RED SAIL SPORTS, Grand Cayman



Born in Australia, Rod McDowall was a high school teacher for seven years before turning to his greater enjoyment of the underwater world for a career change. He traveled to the Cayman Islands while on an education service leave in 1982 and took a dive instructor position on Grand Cayman. He managed Surfside Watersports for three years, during which time he served as President of the Cayman Islands Watersports Operators Association (CIWOA). In 1987, he joined Red Sail Sports as Assistant Operations Manager before becoming Operations Manager in 1989, a position he holds today.

Rod is currently the President of the Cayman Tourism Alliance (CTA) and has always been actively involved in working with the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism to promote the country's diving and watersports assets. *RSD* caught up with him in Grand Cayman where he lives with his wife Penny, son Jamie, 13, and daughter Jessica, 10.

RSD Extra: The CIWOA is fast becoming the model for business alliances everywhere. How did it get its start?

Rod: In the early 1980s, diving in the Cayman Islands started to be seriously promoted by the government as a major part of its tourism product. What was originally the Cayman Islands Watersports Operators Association (CIWOA) was formed in 1980 by private watersports operators. They met and put together a series of standards and procedures that they wanted Cayman diving tourism to follow in terms of diving safety, professionalism, and a code of ethics. As the industry has grown and changed, the operators in Cayman have adjusted their procedures and policies accordingly.

RSD Extra: How did you get involved with CIWOA and how does it relate to the Cayman Tourism Alliance?

Rod: When I was GM-Operations with Surfside Watersports in 1984, I became involved as a member and joined various committees related to education, fundraising and safety and was elected president of the CIWOA back in '85 or '86. The CIWOA has now been absorbed into a larger tourism association called the Cayman Tourism Alliance (CTA) which includes representation from the hotel and condominium sector, watersports operators, dive operators, restaurants, and the transportation companies on island. All of the tourism-related sectors have joined together to have one voice to promote the island's assets in a more efficient way. And I am now president of that association.

RSD Extra: It sounds like the CTA is considerably bigger than the CIWOA. Is that more effective?

Rod: It is. The individual sectors, e.g., watersports, restaurants, etc., still have individual meetings to look after the specific issues of their sector. It's in those monthly meetings that they discuss day-to-day issues among themselves and report back to the general membership as a whole.

We have a lot more people with creative thought processes working together as one group rather than many individual sectors all looking for the same goals. Our ability to market and promote the island has improved, particularly in light of today's climate of heavy competition, not only in the Caribbean but worldwide. Plus, it gets down to a matter of resources and finances that can be used better as well, so we don't have that duplication of administrative processes that we used to have.

RSD Extra: How does the watersports committee help divers?

Rod: The important thing that we have to give divers down here is the best diving experience they can have on vacation. And the Cayman Islands, obviously, is one of the best dive resort locations in the world. We need to continue to maintain high standards of service and quality of product in regard to the reefs themselves as well as our boats, equipment and staff. And we need to maintain a variety of options to suit all levels of divers. We need to have enough variety in our product to enable every diver to have a great experience when they come to the Cayman Islands. The clear water, the warm water, the beautiful reefs are all givens, but there are other places that have those. We certainly need to keep our competitive edge, and working together as a watersports committee, we will continue to do just that.

RSD Extra: Does the association address resource usage?

Rod: We work closely with the Department of Tourism as well as environmental teams to assess the usage of reefs. For example, we evaluate whether, once sufficient moorings are in, we may remove some to relieve the stress on some of the more popular areas. One of the reasons why as a group we're so successful is our ability to self-regulate and control the quality of our product. We've done it for 20 years and we're going to continue. A lot of other countries and groups haven't had success in working together. It's one of the things unique to the Cayman Islands.

RSD Extra: What advice do you have for others that may be starting to form their own travel and tourism associations?

Rod: In the initial stage, you've got to put your individual needs aside and focus on the bigger picture — the product of the country or the state that you're working with. Once that gets promoted properly, then people will come and then you try and take advantage of that situation as aggressively as you can by being as creative as you can. But the important thing is to genuinely work together to promote the product or the island first, then tag in with your best shot for your individual companies.

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Anthony's Key Resort

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by April 30, 2001 and you will receive a certificate which makes you and any friends accompanying you in 2002 eligible for half off a 7-night package. (Restrictions apply.)

800-227-3483, www.anthonyskey.com Booth 1933

Atomic Aquatics

The first to enhance the split fin concept with multiple materials, Atomic Aquatics now has a complete offering of sizes and colors. The addition of the SplitFin product is consistent with their philosophy to produce a limited number of only the best performing products in each major diving equipment category.

714-375-1433, www.atomicaquatics.com Booth 1479

Bahamas Diving Association

Sharks, Wrecks, Dolphins and Walls, The Islands of The Bahamas has it all! Whether you are new to diving or a seasoned instructor, you can find amazing diversity in The Bahamas. We have 700 islands, two oceans, and thousands of dive sites, all only minutes from Miami.



800-866-DIVE, www.bahamasdiving.com Booth 2058/2059

Cayman Islands

The Cayman Islands is recognized as the birthplace of recreational diving in the Caribbean. We've been show-



ing off our spectacular underwater world since 1957. Today, Cayman is one of the world's top dive destinations, with more than 50 dive operations and 200 dive sites.

800-346-3313, www.divecayman.ky Booth 2527

Divers Alert Network

The largest association of recreational scuba divers in the world, DAN® provides dive medicine, safety and health services and products, education and training.

800-446-2671.

www.DiversAlertNetwork.org Booth 1771



DrägerDive America

Booth 513

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Honduras Institute of Tourism

Diving and much much more. Stop by our booth and learn about the archaeological ruins, the amazing bird watching, white water rafting and fly fishing that, when combined with diving, make the perfect adventure vacation. Special programs to help dive stores book trips and incentives for travel agents.





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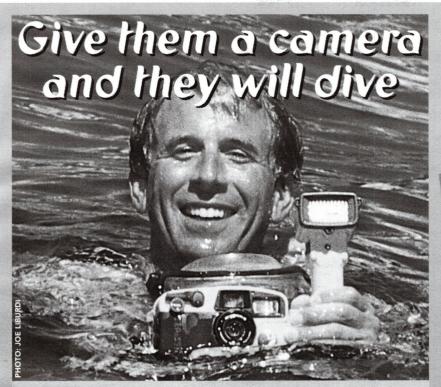
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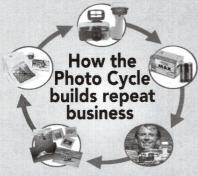
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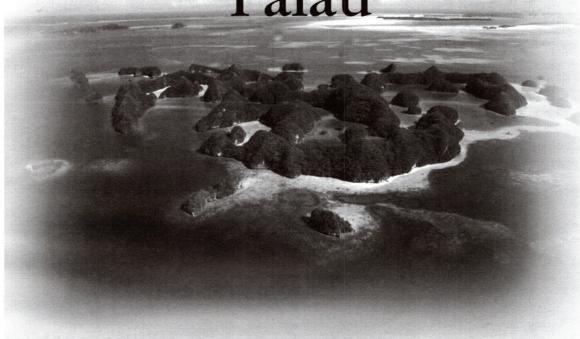
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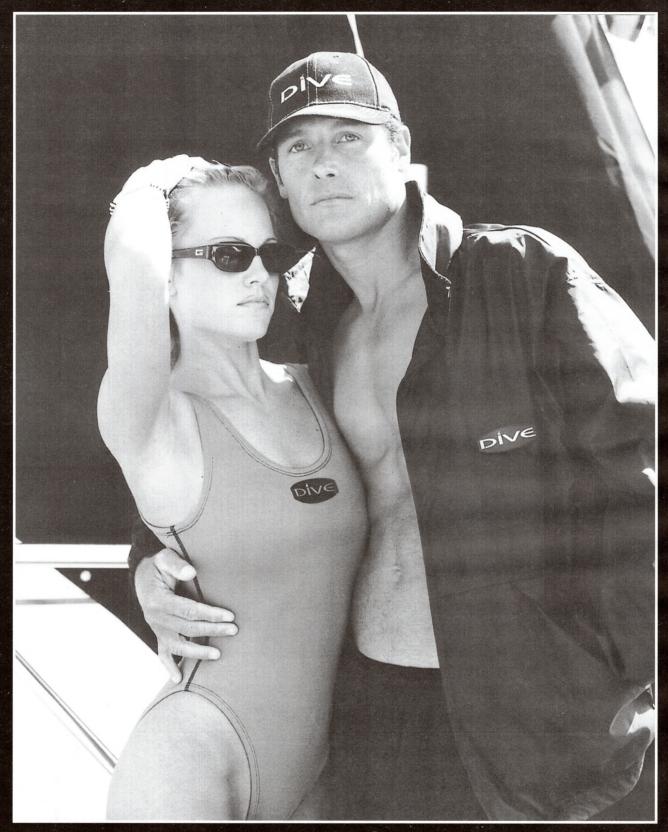


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The Flamingo Divers Program gives you the option of diving on a fast boat with several departures a day or the popular day trip which includes lunch and is a bit more relaxed. At the in-house dive operation, you can rent Scubapro equipment, arrange dive trip and sign up for certification courses through our English-speaking PADI dive instructor. We also offer a gear rinse and storage service to make your vacation worry-free.

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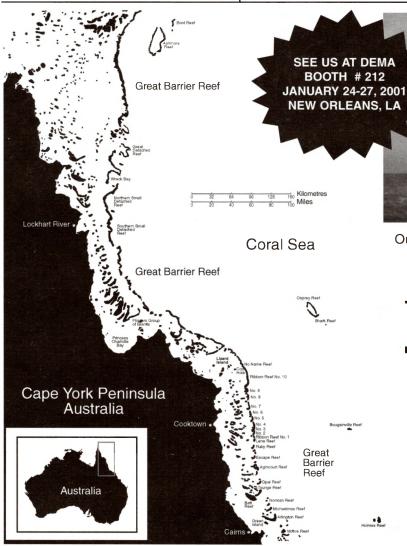
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ranging from 75 to 150 ft and a mean water temperature of 78 to 80 deg. F., an impressive dive fleet, knowledgeable dive masters and staff to cater to your every need, there is no comparison. There are approximately 35 distinct dive sites within 5 to 30 minutes of the resort. These sites provide an unusual variety of caves, ledges, tunnels, holes, walls, sand chutes and eel gardens. Almost every species of tropical fish and coral indigenous to the Caribbean can be found here. The reefs are beautiful and an irreplaceable natural resource of the Island. The reefs are part of the Sandy Bay West End Marine Reserve and are completely protected.

THE DIVE SHOP is equipped with 10,000 cu. ft. of compressed air storage with two 80 C.F.M. main diesel compressors. We have 6 dive boats with a diversaster and captain for each boat. Each diver must have a certification card, a submersible pressure gauge and a BC jacket. Each buddy team must have a depth gauge and timing device. The first time you report to the dive shop you will be assigned a tank and storage number for the week. The boat sign-up procedure will be explained at that time. Prior to your first dive you will perform a short orientation dive. This is required by everyone and insures that divers are comfortable with their equipment and buoyancy before going on their first dive.

THE DIVE FLEET EXPANSION began with the purchase of one Pro 48' Custom Dive boat. intended to quickly transport guests to dive sites around the neighboring islands. The original intention was overwhelmed by its popularity, forcing AKR to invest in an additional three, Pro 48's. These boats are primarily used for charters and weekly outer island excursions to be enjoyed by AKR quests and non-quests alike. Exclusively for the Snorkelers at AKR, a Pro 51' Custom Tri Moran was purchased as well and it is dedicated to two guided snorkel trips daily.

Now our original six island built dive boats, that are used for regular diving, are to retire and to be replaced with Pro 42' Custom Dive boats. The good news to our guests is that they will soon be diving on modern dive boats that can get them quickly to sites that are further away. The Pro 42' dive boats will be begin joining the fleet as they are delivered to AKR between August and November 2000.

For the AKR quest that is looking for something a little different to do, we also have added a deep-sea fishing program. We offer full day and half-day charters aboard a 36' Hatteras, powered by twin diesels.

THE AGUILA — The request from divers for a nearby wreck dive was one that could no longer be overlooked. In 1997, Anthony's Key Resort purchased, salvaged and sunk the "Aguila", a 220' long cargo vessel. The "Aguila" ran freight between Puerto Cortes, Honduras and the Caribbean; it ran ashore in the Utila keys during one of its voyages. The "Aguila" now rests in 100' of water behind Bailey's Key; only a two-minute boats ride from the dock!

AS A PADI GOLD PALM 5 STAR INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT CENTER, Anthony's Key Resort is now able to certify divers from Open Water all the way to Instructor. There is a full staff of PADI instructors available here to enable guest to commence classes daily. IDC's are scheduled throughout the calendar year.

We now offer NITROX, the SASY program for children 5 years and up, the Bubble makers program for children 8 to 10 years, Jr. Open Water certifications for children over 10 years and over a dozen other specialty courses for adults, including crossover certifications from other

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ENUIRONMENT

REEF Wins Award

2001 is shaping up to be a very good year for the Reef Environmental Education Foundation (REEF). The non-profit organization of more than 17,000 recreational divers was recently honored for its work to promote marine education and conservation.

REEF earned the EPA's Environmental Merit Award for teaching
Joe and Jane Diver to identify marine life and conduct fish surveys during their dives. The surveys are compiled into a database that divers, scientists and government

officials use to understand and protect fish habitats throughout the Caribbean, South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, as well as the Pacific from the West Coast of the United States and Canada to the Gulf of California and the Galapagos

Islands. REEF will debut a new survey

program for Hawaiian fish in February.

Case in point: REEF data recently convinced state and federal wildlife officials that Florida jewfish populations, although rebounding, have not recovered enough to sustain renewed fishing.

REEF 2001 Field Trips

What's In It For You

Membership in REEF is free and open to anyone interested in marine life. Divers can join local survey projects at any dive shop that's a participating field

station, or request free survey materials and conduct surveys on dives of their own.

The best way to build your knowledge of marine life and help conduct surveys is to join one of this year's REEF field surveys (see box), one-week dive vacations with an added bonus—fish identification training by one of REEF's expert fishwatchers. Many divers are amazed at how much more enjoyable diving is with their expanded knowledge of marine wildlife.

For more information, contact REEF at (305) 451-0312 or visit www.reef.org.

You'll swim farther and faster with less effort if you reduce the drag. Here's how:

TUCK IN HOSES. Your console and octopus should be clipped close to your body. Otherwise, tuck them under a shoulder strap or cummerbund.

CUT THE CLUTTER. If you don't expect to use a piece of gear, leave it behind. If you need it, put it away in a BC pocket if possible. The drag from even small items dangling from D-rings adds up.

CLOSE FLAPS. Open pockets can scoop water, creating drag.

STOW THE SNORKEL. Take your snorkel off your mask. Tuck it under your BC or next to your knife or leave it behind.

TRAIL YOUR ARMS. Trying to stroke with your arms only wastes energy. Keep them extended by your sides, or clasp your hands behind your butt or in front of your belt buckle.

DON'T BE HEAVY. Extra weight means inflating your BC to make you neutral, which means a bigger BC to push through the water.

BE NEUTRAL. If you're negative, you'll be wasting energy finning your body upward.

LEGS STRAIGHT, BODY HORIZONTAL. Your legs should be nearly straight, not bent at the knee. Likewise, your body should be nearly horizontal so you punch the smallest hole through the water.

SHORT, SLOW KICKS. Kick from the hips in short strokes that keep your fins more or less within the slipstream of your body.

DON'T TRY TO GO TOO FAST. Most of the extra energy you put into kicking hard will produce turbulence, not speed.

— JOHN FRANCIS

READER POLL

Marine Parks

WOULD YOU PAY TO PLAY?

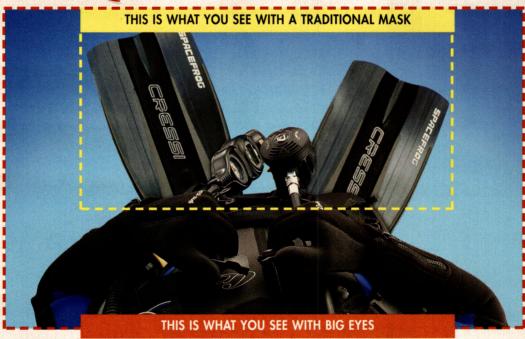
- Q: Would you be inclined to select a dive destination if it featured a marine park or protected area?
- A: Yes: 68.6 percent No: 1.1 percent Maybe: 30.3 percent
- Q: Would you be willing to pay a nominal fee (approximately \$1 per diving day/\$10 per week) to support a marine park or protected area?
- A Yes: 91.1 percent No: 8.9 percent

Source: Survey of *RSD* subscribers by Abacus Custom Research, August 2000.

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DIVE ALERT

Alien Alga in California

With the help of observant divers and a little liquid chlorine, state and federal officials believe they have stopped the first-ever outbreak of an aggressive alien alga in the Western Hemisphere.

WHAT HAPPENED This past summer, a research diver discovered more than three dozen patches of the alga, *Caulerpa taxifolia*, in Agua Hedionda Lagoon, 20 miles north of San Diego. These patches were eradicated with controlled doses of liquid chlorine, although officials will continue to monitor the site until they're certain the alga won't regrow. A separate alga patch was also discovered by recreational divers in Huntington Harbor, about 90 miles to the north, and slated for eradication.

WHY IT'S DANGEROUS The Caulerpa variety found in California is the same alga which was mis-

For more information on *Caulerpa taxifolia*, go to: http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/hcd/CAULERPA.htm



takenly released into the North Mediterranean in the late 1980s. That outbreak has since carpeted 10,000 acres of seabed, turning biologically diverse habitats into monocultures.

Because this variety can resist cold and grow to depths approaching 500 feet—all while warding off predators with toxin-filled tissues—scientists fear it could overrun natural habitats ranging from eelgrass meadows to giant kelp forests.

HOW IT GOT THERE It is a popular aquarium alga. Scientists think it took hold in California sites after being dumped by home aquarium owners.

HOW YOU CAN HELP Officials are asking divers to report suspected patches, by calling (858) 467-4201. "It was an individual, after seeing the press information about the San Diego site, who notified us of the algae in Huntington Harbor," said Bob Hoffman, of National Marine Fisheries Service.

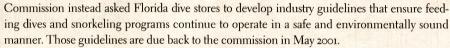
-LANCE LEONHARDT

ENVIRONMENT

FWCC Unanimously Rejects Feeding Ban

Thanks in no small part to the readers of RSD, Florida wildlife officials have unanimously rejected a proposal that would have banned divers from feeding marine life.

By a 9-0 vote, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation



The decision delighted two busloads of divers who packed the meeting room and argued against the ban, which would have restricted the rights of divers. In an online petition, more than 2,100 RSD readers also urged the commission to reject the ban.

"This gives the dive industry the opportunity to do what it has done so well in the past—self-regulate," said John Stewart, who spearheaded the lobbying effort.

WEATHER

Belize Back in Business

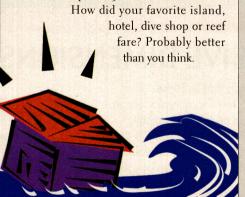
The black cloud behind the silver lining of a mostly quiet Atlantic hurricane season was Hurricane Keith. Packing winds of 135 miles per hour, the category 4 hurricane ripped across the northern coastal islands of Belize in early October, tearing at buildings, downing utility lines and dumping buckets of rain.

Hardest hit was Ambergris Caye, which spent 24 hours in the eyewall of the storm. Topside damage was extensive and almost one-third of the residents of the town of San Pedro were left homeless.

But the news wasn't all bleak. Major dive islands to the south were unscathed, and even the hardest-hit hotels and dive shops were scheduled to be back in business as we went to press in November.

That's good news for island residents who rely on tourism jobs for income. The even better news: Early reports indicate that the reefs received very little damage. Typically, reef damage

from even the worst hurricanes is limited to corals in the top 20 to 30 feet of water.



FOR SPECIFICS

⇒Visit www.scubadiving.com/feature/hurri cane/keith. RSD's own survey of dive operators found encouraging reports in the immediate aftermath of the storm. By the time you read this, operators should be posting more detailed updates.

⇒ Visit www.belizeemergency.net or call (800) 624-0686. Sponsored by the Belize government, this site also provides detailed updates for tourists and news on how you can help residents rebuild their lives in the aftermath of the storm.

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Do not let yourself be

talked into being some-

one's buddy, particularly

as a last-minute change.

If something has already

gone wrong, more prob-

lems are likely.



By Jon Hardy



The Misguided Assist

Taking a stranger as a buddy, one diver gets more than she bargains for.

Setting the Stage

As part of a major "Dive-In" event, Mary, a nurse and master diver with six years of diving experience, was making a shore dive with her local dive club. She planned a 30minute, 100-foot dive to a near-shore underwater wall with one of the club's divemasters, Tom, and a friend of his named Susan. All three were using dive computers and knew that most of the dive would be spent on the swim out and back, following the slope of the bottom. The surf was up, but the three were ready to dive and standing at the water's edge when a middle-aged man and his young adult son bungled their entry, and the father was pulled out of the water with a medical emergency. Medical help was immediately available on the beach and the father was given first aid. The ailing father pleaded with Mary to let his son, Chuck, dive with them. Mary agreed and became Chuck's buddy.

The first problem occurred when Chuck refused to put on his fins to make the surf entry. Without fins, he struggled through the surf, wasting a good deal of air. The group met, as planned, at a buoy to check buoyancy. Chuck arrived at the buoy short of breath, but neither he nor any of the other divers checked his air.

Going Down

The four divers then descended to 40 feet. Tom was not only buddying with Susan, but he had moved off separately with her and she was receiving all of his attention.

At the same time, Chuck was flapping his hands and arms while going nowhere. Mary checked her pressure gauge and found that she had 2,600 psi. She thought that Chuck probably had less air, but figured he was still OK, so she didn't check his pressure gauge.

Now it was just the two of them, and as they moved down the slope, they encountered a thermocline at 80 feet. At this point, they checked their gauges and Chuck was down to 300 psi, less than 15 minutes into the dive.

Panic Attack

Mary and Chuck did not make physical contact and did not prepare to share air. Chuck appeared to have a panic attack and bolted for the surface. Mary raced after him, hoping to stop him and make a shared air ascent. But Chuck arrived at the surface first, so Mary slowed as she approached the surface and even included a pause in shallow water. On the surface, they both inflated their BCs and proceeded to swim in. As they were swimming in, Mary heard a popping sound in her chest, then she started wheezing, as it also became difficult and painful to breathe.

Medical personnel on the beach checked Mary and agreed with her that she needed to go to an emergency room, not a recompression chamber. Chuck disappeared, never to be seen again. Mary went by ambulance to the hospital and was diagnosed with a partial pneumothorax and other respiratory complications. After 12 months out of the water, and lots of medical tests, Mary finally received medical clearance to return to diving.

ON

ONLINE RESOURCES

For more information, check out these internet resources:

12 Signs Your Buddy Is About to Panic www.scubadiving.com/training/instruction/panic.shtml

A Stranger Is Your Dive Buddy www.scubadiving.com/training/instruction/strangebuddy/

Lessons For Life

⇒Do not let yourself be talked into being someone's buddy, particularly as a last-minute change. If something has already gone wrong, more problems are likely.

⇒ If your dive buddy makes bad dive decisions or uses incorrect dive procedures (like Chuck's surf entry in this case), terminate the dive before these errors become compounded.

⇒ Checking air is a three-step process: Check your own, check your buddy's and show your buddy yours.

⇒Allow or request that the most qualified diver in the group, in this case the divernaster, handle or deal with the weakest diver.

⇒ Part of dive planning is to agree on procedures to use in a low-air or out-of-air situation.

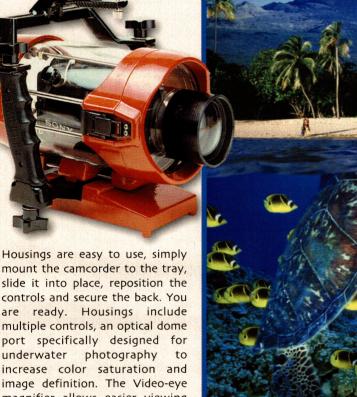
⇒ Do not put yourself at risk of a rapid ascent because of someone else's errors.

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David B. Fleetham

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Sony PC-100

scuba law

By Laurence H. Schnabel

Evaluating Scuba Warranties

How to decipher the fine print, protect your rights and decide if the warranty is worth the paper it's printed on.

Your best warranty protection lies in evaluating warranties before you buy, so you will know what to expect if your equipment fails. Some promises, however, are better than others.

Although warranties are an important feature of expensive equipment like scuba gear, few consumers con-

sider the warranty when buying scuba gear, and fewer still ever read their warranty—at least until the equipment fails. By then, it might be too late to protect your rights.

Here's how to read and evaluate warranties before you make your purchase.

Express Warranties

THE MANUFACTURER'S WRITTEN PROMISE

The express warranty is the one in writing that comes from the manufacturer with your purchase of new equipment. In it, the manufacturer promises that the equipment is free from defects in workmanship and materials as of the time it was manufactured, and tells you what it will do if the equipment fails because of such a defect.

Express warranties are almost invariably labeled "limited," and they are, usually with respect to time. Some manufacturers will spell out the guaranteed life of a product or individual parts, like hoses.

The remedy if there is a defect will be limited to repair or replacement at the manufacturer's discretion and the manufacturer invariably disavows any liability for consequential damages, such as the cost of your ruined dive trip because the equipment failed. The warranty is limited to the original purchaser and often requires you to purchase the product from a manufacturer's authorized dealers.



REGULATOR WARRANTIES MONEY IN THE BANK

You know that regular maintenance is important to keeping your regulator in top condition. But unless you read the warranty card, you might not know that having it serviced annually is often required to keep the warranty valid.

Warranties differ, of course, so read the fine print. You may even get a pleasant surprise. Some regulator warranties will provide, at no charge to you, the parts that should be replaced annually. You'll still pay the labor charge—around \$20 per stage—but by taking advantage of free parts, the reduced cost of annual servicing is a sound investment that can extend your regulator's working life indefinitely.

Implied Warranty WHAT THE LAW GIVES THE PURCHASER

Many consumers have never heard of implied warranties. They don't come from the manufacturer. Instead, most if not all states give you what is called an implied warranty of merchantability when you buy the product from a dealer. To be "merchantable," the product must be fit for the ordinary purposes for which it is used.

An implied warranty of fitness for a particular purpose also arises when the seller knows you are relying upon his expertise to select a product for a specific purpose. For example, you ask a dealer to recommend a dive watch that will withstand a certain pressure. If he recommends one, and the watch then leaks or otherwise fails at that pressure, you may have a claim for breach of this warranty. Finally,





if the product is not fit for its ordinary purpose, state statutes provide the buyer with a variety of other remedies.

Note that in some states only the dealer who sells you the product is bound by the implied warranty of merchantability. Other regularly? states also bind the manufacturer with this warranty. A manufacturer may "disclaim" or "limit" implied warranties where applicable federal and state law allow this. The disclaimers or limitations are usually written into the manufacturer's express warranty, so be sure to look for them.

Buyer Beware USING DUE DILIGENCE

to ask:

While these warranties may be useful if your equipment fails, you can also protect yourself by using common sense before buying. Be sure

⇒Which competitive model gives the longest warranty? Does the warranty have a longer life on some parts, and a shorter life on others?

⇒ Is the seller of the product an authorized dealer? If not, does this void the express warranty? If it does, is the seller giving you an equivalent express warranty? This issue may arise when you buy from a mail-order house.

⇒ If someone other than the manufacturer or authorized dealer services your equipment, does this void any warranties? Does the express warranty require that you service the product

⇒ If you make a warranty claim, what are you entitled to-refund, repair or replacement? Does the warranty tell you how many times the manufacturer may attempt to repair the defect before it must replace the equipment (a few warranties do, most don't)? If a manufacturer agrees to replace a defective product, will it prorate the replacement (e.g., replace your \$400 BC with a new one but make you pay \$100 as a depreciation expense)? How long is the warranty on the replacement (is it a new term or just the amount of time left on the original product)? What is the procedure for getting warranty repairs? Who does the repairs?

⇒Can you inspect or try out the product before you buy it? You don't want to open the box at home and then find out it's defective. Under the Uniform Commercial Code adopted by nearly every state, you give up your implied warranty rights as to defects you could have spotted by reasonable inspection. Pre-purchase

inspection also eliminates any argument between you and the dealer or manufacturer as to how or when the defect arose.

⇒ How reputable, knowledgeable and experienced is the dealer? Does he acknowledge his implied warranty obligations versus telling you that your sole remedy for defects is with the manufacturer?

The Bottom Line

KNOW BEFORE YOU BUY

Knowing your legal rights is a wondrous thing. But your best warranty protection lies in evaluating warranties before you buy, so you will know what to expect if your equipment later fails. This includes asking the manufacturer or dealer any unanswered questions before you part with your money. Exercising your legal rights will require you to prove the failure is due to a defect in the equipment's manufacture or design. This is frequently a difficult burden. Doing your homework before you buy may spare you the hassle.

Laurence Schnabel is a member of the California State Bar and a PADI-certified diver.

DIVE TIP

What to Pack for a Live-Aboard

This tip comes from the www.scubadiving.com SPARE BATTERIES for everything that requires Diver2Diver forum. For more great tips, go to: www.scubadiving.com

Things you should take

C-CARD. Take the one that shows your highest rating—advanced open water always wins points in gaining dive freedom. Take just a basic C-card if you want to be treated as a novice.

LOGBOOK. The current one. Divemasters want to assess your experience, and fellow divers are just interested

NITROX CERTIFICATION CARD if you've done the course. Most vessels offer nitrox—some at an additional charge.

ALL YOUR DIVE GEAR except tanks and weights (those are always provided).

ADDITIONAL THERMAL PROTECTION. Four or five dives per day will lower your core temperature. I recommend a hooded bib or at least a bonnet.

FULL SAVE-A-DIVE KIT with any unique parts you might need. The boat's "dive shop" carries a limited supply of common items.

them—including your dive computer. The on-board "boutique" may stock common sizes, but selection is

BATTERY CHARGER, if appropriate.

ANY PRESCRIPTION MEDS—in quantities sufficient for the entire trip-plus a couple days in case travel is delayed.

DIVE ACCIDENT INSURANCE CARD and medical insurance card. Hope you stay healthy, but plan for the contingency.

SAFETY SAUSAGE. Provides visibility in case you get separated from the ship.

WHISTLE OR DIVE ALERT HORN for the same rea-

DECK OF CARDS. There's a slight chance you'll get bored

SEVERAL PAPERBACKS. The staff would appreciate you leaving them behind after reading them.

CDS of your favorite tunes. There's always a player and other divers might share your taste in music.

VIDEO OR TWO OF RECENT MOVIE(S) others may not have seen

A COUPLE OF CANISTERS OF POWDERED

GATORADE. They're small, light and disposable. After buying a couple of two-liter bottles of water for the flight, the empty bottles come in handy when mixing your own refreshments once on the ship. Personally, I find Gatorade more refreshing than onboard sodas for the surface interval.

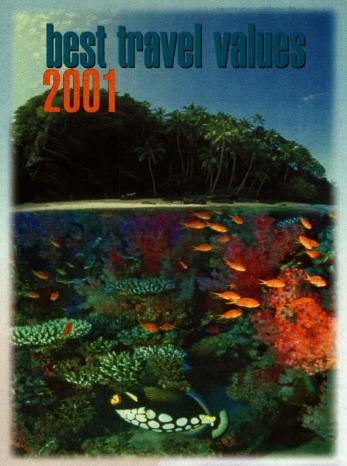
SOFT-SIDED LUGGAGE. Space is limited. Make certain your possessions will occupy the least possible space.

CREDIT CARD. On the big-name vessels, you can close out all your on-board charges to your credit card.

Things you should leave home

LOTS OF CLOTHING. You'll be living in swimsuits and T-shirts all week. You may need "regular" surface wear for local excursions before or after the cruise, but not aboard the ship.

AN ATTITUDE. Other divers, including the staff, will be from all areas of the globe. They'll have different philosophies and different practices based on their personal experience.





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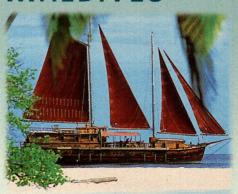
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MALDIVES

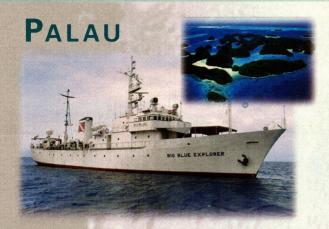


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by Bret Gilliam, Technical Diving Editor



Scuba Achievement Test 1: Nitrox

A regular new column to stimulate your Scuba IQ during the prolonged surface interval known as "life."

clued in when it comes to most Jamaican proctologist? fads. I'm still not sure what the

Although nitrox started out slowly whole Pokemon thing has left me icism early on, it transcended fad sta-

admit that I'm not particularly wondering: why all the fuss over a tus to become positively mainstream and (gasp!) respectable for divers of all levels. So sharpen your pencil and see Beanie Baby fascination is, and the and attracted a lot of uninformed crit- how many brain cells you can strainon our inaugural SAT.

Answers to quiz on next page

- The first nitrox certification for sport divers was offered in:
 - A) 1971
- B) 1977
- **C)** 1985
- D) 1990
- Which of the following names has not L been used to describe nitrox:
 - A) NOAA Nitrox I
- B) Safe Air
 - C) Enriched Air
- D) EANX
- E) Normox II
- A nitrox mixture containing 32% oxygen and 68% nitrogen can be called:
 - A) NOAA Nitrox II B) Nitrous Oxide
 - **C)** EAN32

DAVID TAYLOR

- D) Trimix
- Nitrox was originally popularized by NOAA to allow its diving scientists to:
 - A) saturate in underwater habitats
 - B) extend bottom times and reduce surface intervals between dives on research ships
 - C) eliminate garbled speech in deep water communications
 - D) test dexterity during prolonged dives
- When nitrox mixes are used with air diving computers or tables, this is
 - A) physiological advantage
 - B) psychological advantage
 - C) Boyle's Law reductivity
 - D) you should not use nitrox with air computers or tables

- The maximum oxygen partial pres-O sure (PO₂) recommended by most experts under normal sport diving conditions is:
 - A) 1.3 ATA
- C) 1.5 ATA
- **B)** 1.4 ATA
- **D)** 1.6 ATA
- Nitrox mixes are most effective at extending bottom times with planned depths between:
 - A) 10 and 30 ft. B) 30 and 50 ft.
 - C) 50 and 130 ft. D) 130 and 200 ft.
- Before diving, a nitrox diver should:
- A) ensure availability of green tanks
 - B) analyze tank mix to determine its oxygen percentage
 - C) O2 clean regulator and lowpressure inflator mechanism
 - D) log O2 percentage with diversaster
- In nitrox diving, the abbreviation EAD means:
 - A) equalize all doses
 - B) equivalent air depth
 - C) every action diminishes
 - D) exposure always declines
- To maximize bottom times and surface intervals:
 - A) use a programmable nitrox dive computer
 - B) use NOAA nitrox tables
 - C) never use mixes over 36% oxygen
 - D) treat all dives as air dives

- The most popular nitrox mix is:
 - A) 30% oxygen
- C) 34% oxygen
- B) 32% oxygen
- D) 36% oxygen
- The most important rule in nitrox diving is:
 - A) do not exceed the maximum depth for your oxygen percentage
 - B) extend your safety stop to reduce PO2
 - C) never use nitrox for ice diving
 - D) recalibrate your O2 analyzer after each tank check
- Which of the following is not a method of producing nitrox fills:
 - A) partial pressure blending
 - B) hookah two-gas blending
 - C) atmospheric entrainment/ continuous blend
 - D) permeable membrane separation systems
- Nitrox tanks should be designated as such by:
 - A) writing or painting "nitrox" on them permanently
 - B) using nitrox tank bands and mix tags
 - C) painting tanks black with a white top
 - D) using a green tank-valve cover

ANSWERS TO SAT #1: NITROX DIVING

- 1. C) 1985 When Dick Rutkowski retired as deputy director of diving for NOAA in 1985, he began teaching nitrox theory to interested divers. Shortly thereafter, he formed IAND (International Association of Nitrox Divers) to issue certifications.
- 2. E) Normox II "Normox" or "normal oxygen" refers to standard air and its 21 percent oxygen. At various times, all the other terms have been used to describe nitrox. "Nitrox" is most commonly heard today because of its simplicity in describing the wide variety of oxygen percentages used.
- **3.** C) EAN32 The acronym EAN stands for Enriched Air Nitrox and the number following represents the oxygen percentage in the mix.
- **4.** B) extend bottom times and reduce surface intervals between dives on research ships Nitrox maximized the scientists' ability

- to spend more time under water, thus allowing more direct contact with subjects and research projects. In some cases, bottom times could be doubled with no decompression, and surface intervals between dives could be shortened to as little as 30 minutes if necessary.
- **5.** A) physiological advantage If nitrox, typically EAN32, is used with an air computer or air tables, a significant safety margin is gained by the diver since his computer or tables "think" he is diving on normoxic air with 21 percent oxygen. He is actually diving a mix with an additional 11 percent of oxygen, giving him a safety edge for decompression limits and surface intervals.
- **6.** D) 1.6 ATA While still debated by some conservatives, the overwhelming majority of nitrox divers routinely use a PO₂ of 1.6 to set depth limits for their dives. Oxygen dose is determined by a combination of pressure expressed as PO₂ and time expressed in minutes of exposure. NOAA has published oxygen
- exposure tables to show limits for PO₂s ranging from 1.0 to 2.0 ATA. The time limit at a PO₂ of 1.6 is 45 minutes, more than twice the nodecompression time. Bottom line: Nitrox divers will not have a problem exceeding oxygen limits if they stay within recommended nodecompression limits. As the planned dive time is extended, the PO₂ limit must be adjusted downward. In a nutshell, longer bottom times with decompression will dictate lesser PO₂s. It's also a good idea to reduce the PO₂ if hard physical work, cold water or extensive repetitive diving is planned.
- 7. C) 50 and 130 feet Shallow-water diving and diving deeper than 130 feet are not the best match for nitrox mixes. At depths shallower than 50 feet, no-decompression times are already quite long and nitrox would likely extend dives beyond any usable time frame. Before the no-decompression limit kicked in most people would need to pee, change film, eat something or warm up. Deeper than 130 feet, nitrox mixes can still extend no-decom-





pression bottom time, but the advantage is less 10 minutes on air to 20 minutes on EAN32. pronounced.

- 8. B) analyze tank mix to determine its oxygen percentage No diver should use a nitrox tank without positively determining its oxygen content, either by observing the dispenser making the analysis or by using an oxygen analyzer personally to check the mix. After establishing the mix (accuracy to within 1 percent is acceptable), the diver then sets the oxygen percentage on his nitrox computer, follows nitrox tables for that mix, or uses air tables or an air computer.
- 9. B) equivalent air depth This means that the uptake of nitrogen during a dive with a nitrox mix will be the same as diving air at a certain depth. Before nitrox computers were available, EADs had to be determined mathematically and then an air table schedule could be followed for planning nitrox dives. For example, diving EAN32 at 132 feet is equivalent to diving normoxic air at 120 feet. The nitrox mix doubles the no-decompression time at this depth from

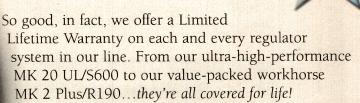
- 10. A) use a programmable nitrox computer Just as air computers allow longer dives by calculating the multi-level aspects of a dive instead of a square profile (max depth for total time), nitrox computers will dramatically extend the diver's bottom time. Computers also take over calculations of PO2 exposure, repetitive dive surface intervals, shifts in EAD with depth changes, etc.
- 11. B) 32% oxygen This mix has evolved as the most popular for nitrox divers because it matches nicely to the 130-foot depth limitation recommended for sport divers and gives a wide latitude of use in those depths.
- 12. A) do not exceed the maximum depth for your oxygen percentage Unlike depth limits suggested for nitrogen narcosis, which can be subjective and can vary widely, oxygen limits are more rigid and reflect hard numbers that should be observed. Exceeding the max

operating depth of a mix can be extremely dangerous if the diver were then to exceed the time limit for that PO2, placing him in a range of vulnerability for oxygen toxicity. The good news is that no sport diver has ever had an oxygen incident when diving nitrox within NOAA PO₂ time limits.

- 13. B) hookah two-gas blending No such thing so far as we know. The other three methods of producing nitrox can give you a mix within 1 percent accuracy of your target oxygen percentage.
- 14. B) using nitrox tank bands and mix tags There was a move to have nitrox cylinders painted yellow with a green top to distinguish them from air cylinders, but the use of tank bands, usually green and white, is the accepted protocol. These bands are clearly marked with the word "NITROX". Some provide a space to mark the nitrox mix. In other cases, a separate contents tag is used to note the nitrox oxygen content.

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By John Francis



15 Sensible Dive Knives

OK guys, for the last time—it's a tool, not a

weapon.



Line-cutting notches, like the one on the side of the Akona Sidekick's blade (above), are a common feature of dive knives. They provide a quick and easy way to cut monofilament line, a common entanglement hazard for divers.

Rating System పిపిపిపి Excellent పిపిపిపి Very Good పిపిపి Good పిపి Fair పి Poor

en are stupid about knives. It's one of those subjects like guns and fast cars that gets the old testosterone flowing. And we all know what effect that has on clear thinking.

As a result, too many dive knives look like Steven Segal action figure weapons. The latest trend is the "tech" look with an ultra-thin "skeleton" steel handle. They come finished in black, too, for midnight murder. So the obvious needs repeating: A dive knife is a tool for cutting stuff under water—not an anti-terrorist weapon.

Knives in Review

Following are 15 dive knives that more or less meet the criteria set out in "How to Buy a Dive Knife," pg. 36. Most models are also available in sharp-pointed versions.

I tried all knives against half-inch nylon rope (the typical anchor line), one-eighth-inch polyester with a Kevlar

core (Kevlar is very hard to cut), one-eighth-inch nylon twine (commonly used for fishing nets) and 30-pound test monofilament. All these knives did the job, some faster than others, as noted.

AKONA SIDEKICK &&&&

The Sidekick's line cutter is placed at the middle of one edge, where it's more accessible than on most knives. The blade guard is good, a wide V, though the handle is a bit short. The sheath has a unique release/engagement mechanism that's easy to use. Release is smooth and engagement is positive. There's no provision for boltmounting, though, just straps or belt and strap. With a butt cap and lanyard hole.

STATS Length and thickness with sheath: 9 inches by 1.4 inches. Blade length: 4 inches. Blade material: 420 stainless steel. Serration type: Coarse. Handle length: 3.8 inches. Price: \$55. Contact: Akona Adventure Gear, (949) 581-8069. Web: www.akona.com.

BEUCHAT MAXIMO POCKET KNIFE

The problem with a folding knife is that it may require two hands to open it. This one can be opened one-handed—but just barely. A lot of the blade projects from the handle, and a slot cut in it gives something to get your thumb into. This also makes it reasonably easy to manage when wearing gloves. Assuming you can open it, a folding knife makes some sense, because when it's folded, it's smaller



THOSE TECH KNIVES

OK, you wanted to see them, so here are a couple. Wicked, eh?

The only advantage of these knives (to a diver, not a terrorist) is that they are thin. They can lie flat against your leg or whatever with less chance of snagging something.

The major disadvantage is that the thin polished

handle can be hard to grip if it's wet, your hands are cold or you're wearing thick gloves. A knife isn't much good after you drop it into the abyss. The blade guard is pretty minimal too.

At left, Ocean Reef Tek Knife (\$62; in black, \$66) and above, Sport Divers Manufacturing Skeleton (\$20).



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BIMINI	Bill & Nowdla Keefe's Bimini Underse	awww.biminiundersea.com	800-348-4644			www.divershaven.com		
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CAT ISLAN	CAT ISLAND				Stuart Cove's	www.stuartcove.com		888-35-SHARK
	Greenwood Dive Center & Beach Res	ortwww.greenwoodbeachresort.	com242-342-3053	SAN SAL				
CHUB CAY	Scuba Chub Cay Undersea Adventure	eswww.scubachub.com	800-327-8150		Riding Rock Resort	www.ridingrock.com		800-272-1492
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	Valentines Dive Shop	www.valentines.com	242-333-2080			www.aquacatcruises.		
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than any BC knife and easily fits inside a pocket. When extended, it has a full-sized grip and a nearly full-sized blade. The lower edge is half plain, half serrated with the wavy style that can be sharpened on an ordinary stone. The plain portion has considerable "belly," or curve, to improve sawing. The line cutter is near the point, where it should be, and is equally useful when the knife is folded. The blade locks open when extended so you can't accidentally close the blade on your fingers; press a bar on the back of the handle to release the lock.



STATS Length and thickness with sheath: 4.7 inches by 0.6 inches folded; 8.4 inches by 0.6 inches extended. **Blade length:** 3 inches. **Blade material:** 301 stainless steel. **Serration type:** Wavy. **Handle length:** 4.5 inches. **Price:** \$36. **Contact:** Beuchat North America, (305) 548-3483. **Web:** www.beuchatdiving.com.

CRESSI-SUB NORGE & & &

The handle of this knife is comfortable, and the grip feels secure. The guard is a good one. The blade is made from stainless steel, alloy unknown. Its upper edge has a section of serrations fine enough not to snag most fibers, but it's short (1.5 inches). Scallops are cut on one side of the blade only, so you can sharpen them easily. The sheath releases easily and engages positively.



STATS Length and thickness with sheath: 9.5 inches by 1.2 inches. **Blade length:** 4 inches. **Blade material:** Stainless steel. **Serration type:** Medium. **Handle length:** 4 inches. **Price:** \$55. **Contact:** Cressi-sub, (800) 338-9143. **Web:** www.cressi-sub.it.

How to Buy

Shopping for a dive knife? Take a cold shower and look for:

MEDIUM LENGTH. Small enough that you have a chance of mounting it on your BC, large enough to grip securely. The only reason for strapping a knife to your leg is that it's too big to go anywhere else. The typical medium knife has a 4-inch blade on a 4- or 5-inch handle. Tiny "BC knives" have come on the market, which can even be clamped to a hose, but remember that you've got to be able to grip the thing pretty securely.

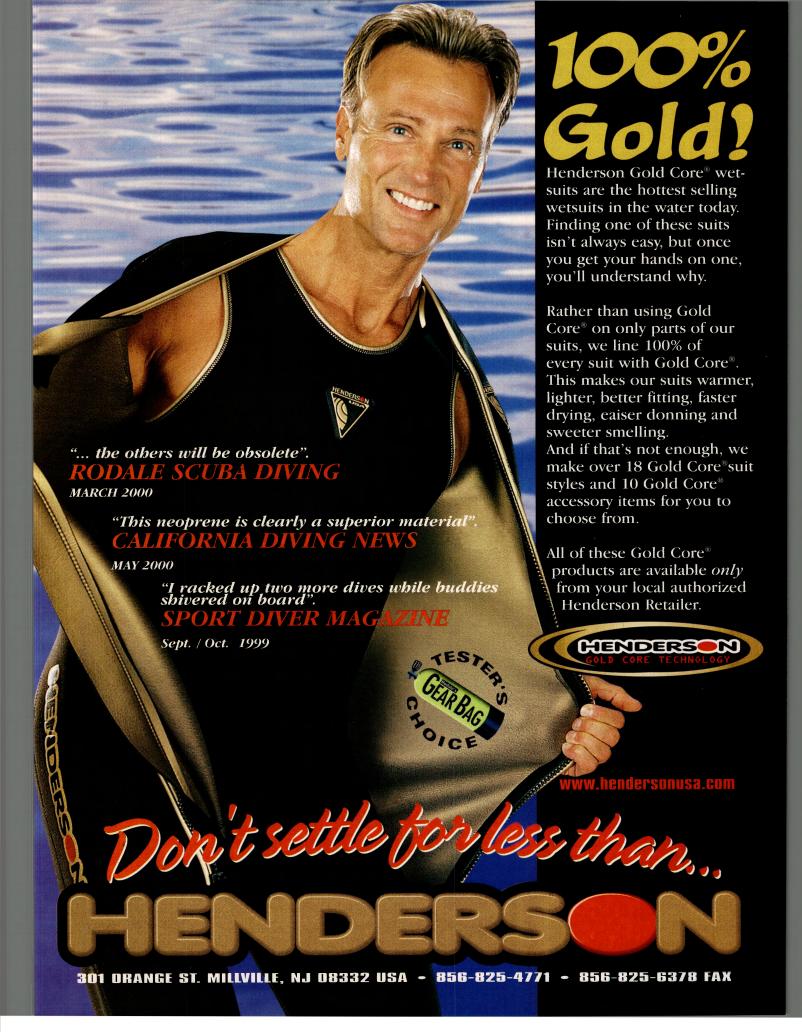
A PLAIN EDGE. For cutting small lines that would be caught between the teeth of a serrated edge. An edge sharp enough to shave your forearm is not as useful as a slightly rougher edge. You won't be shaving under water; you'll be slicing, which is a form of sawing and benefits from having microscopic teeth on the edge. If the plain edge has some "belly," or curve, it slices much better than if it's straight—probably because the point of attack is constantly changing.

A SERRATED EDGE. For sawing thick ropes, like the one that's wrapped around the propeller shaft. Wavy or rounded serrations generally cut rope better than big, sharp saw teeth, which often snag the fibers of the rope. On most dive knives, serrations are more ornamental than useful. They should run nearly the full length of one edge of the knife so you can get a good sawing motion going, and they should be near the tip of the blade because you may have to get it into a tight spot (like between the propeller and the hull).

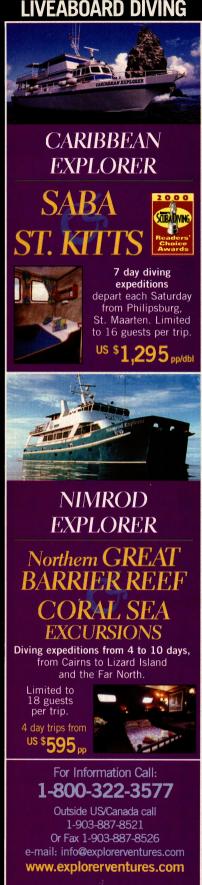
A LINE-CUTTING NOTCH. For snapping monofilament. Snagging the monofilament in one of the serrations usually works as well.

A BLUNT TIP. Sharp tips are for stabbing people, most likely yourself. OK, you might want to work a sharp point under a

"How to Buy a Dive Knife" continued on pg. 38

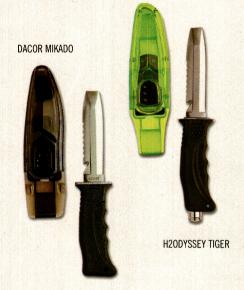






DACOR MIKADO AND H20DYSSEY TIGER & & &

These two knives are identical, except the Tiger has a butt cap. Serrations have rounded tops so they don't catch fibers. They saw well. They are one-sided, and can be easily sharpened. The plain edge cut only fairly well, but a file would improve it. The guard is only fair: the finger side is not well-protected. The sheath has an easy release and positive engagement, but strap mounting only.



STATS Length and thickness with sheath: 9.5 inches by 1.3 inches. Blade length: 4.5 inches. Blade material: 420 stainless steel. Serration type: Coarse. Handle length: 4.3 inches. Price: Dacor, \$40; H2Odyssey, \$39. Contact: Dacor Corp., (800) 323-0463; H20dyssey, (760) 599-4097. Web: Dacor: www.divedacor.com; H2Odyssey: www.h2odyssey.com.

DEEP SEE WENOKA RAZORBACK &&

This knife has only one edge, serrated, plus a ceramic line cutter. The serrations are only medium in size, but with sharp tips that tangle line fibers. That makes cutting loose loops of line difficult. The teeth are one-sided, so they can be sharpened easily. The ceramic blade is extremely sharp and cuts monofilament and even Kevlar, but is too short for slicing. The guard is far from foolproof. It would be easy to slip your thumb onto the razor-sharp ceramic blade. The sheath release requires a hard pull, and engagement requires pushing hard too. Attachment options include thumb screws and a belt loop.

"How to Buy a Dive Knife" from pg. 36

tightly wrapped line so you could cut it. But a blunt tip doesn't have to be as blunt as scuba knives typically are. A quarter of an inch is enough to keep it from puncturing your BC-or you. If you buy a knife with a sharp tip, grind a bit of it off.

AN EFFECTIVE GUARD, It's the part between the handle and the blade that's meant to prevent your fingers from wandering onto the sharp edge. The best ones have a bit of a hook on the bottom side to catch your forefinger, and a thumb rest on the top side.

A FULL-SIZED HANDLE. So you don't drop it. It may be slippery and your hand may be cold and stiff, so you should be able to get all four fingers around it. Remember, you may be wearing gloves.

A LANYARD HOLE. In case you do drop it. You could put a wrist thong here too.

AN INTELLIGENT SHEATH. Look for one with a release operable by one finger of the hand that's grabbing the knife. It should let the knife withdraw smoothly. When you return the knife to the sheath, it should engage positively with a clearly heard or felt "click." The sheath should also have mounting options beyond the usual pair of leg straps, like a belt loop and bolt holes.

CORROSION RESISTANCE, Most dive knives are made from stainless steel. usually the 306, 420 or 440 alloys. Higher numbers mean less corrosion resistance, but more ability to hold a sharp edge during use. Corrosion resistance is more important than hardness if, like most of us, you'll use your dive knife only in a rare emergency. With any luck, you'll have plenty of time to sharpen it again before the next emergency. That's why corrosion-resistant titanium makes such a good dive knife: sharpen it once, and as long as you don't use it, it will be just as sharp 100 dives later. A harder stainless steel knife would have lost its edge to corrosion long before.

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STATS Length and thickness with sheath: 7.4 inches by 1.3 inches. Blade length: 2.2 inches. Blade material: 304 stainless steel, ceramic line cutter. Serration type: Medium, only edge. Handle length: 3.5 inches. Price: \$69 to \$75. Contact: Deep See, (800) 367-2626.



H20DYSSEY TITAN & & & &

The plain edge of this knife has a fair amount of "belly" (curve), which helps it slice. Thanks also to a slightly rough edge, this was the best-cutting knife in the group. The serrations on the upper edge are of the wavy type that cut well without snagging. They are two-sided, however, and will be difficult to sharpen. The handle is excellent with a good grip and guard. Fingers are especially well-protected. Releases from sheath easily, but engagement requires a firm push to a second click; otherwise, you may think it is engaged when it's not. Strap mounting only.



STATS Length and thickness with sheath: 10 inches by 1.3 inches. Blade length: 4.4 inches. Blade material: Titanium. Serration type: Medium, wavy. Handle length: 4 inches. Price: \$89. Contact: H2Odyssey, (760) 599-4097. Web: www.h2odyssey.com.

IDI TITANIUM AND SPORT DIVERS MANUFACTURING TITANIUM &&&&

These two knives have identical blades, and the same excellent handle as the H2Odyssey Titan. The pointed tip is very sharp, but you could grind it off. It does give the plain edge more "belly," so it slices even better than the Titan. The serrated blade, unfortunately, is as bad as it

Dive Knife Maintenance Tips

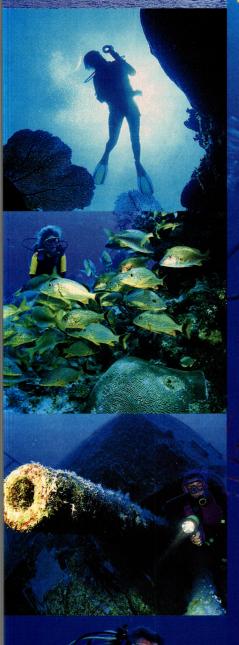
TO SHARPEN A PLAIN EDGE Use a file, not a stone. The edge will be sharp but rough, as if it had tiny serrations. It will slice through any rope much faster than a stone-sharpened edge. As with a stone, try to keep the file at a constant angle and file both sides equally.

TO SHARPEN A SERRATED EDGE If the serrations are cut only on one side of the blade, you're in luck. The easy way to sharpen it is to take a stone to the other edge and sharpen it as if it were a plain edge. But if the serrations are cut on both sides, you'll have to use a bunch of tiny files or stones. Jigs and special tools are available to make the job a little easier, but it will still be slow. One source is Spyderco: (800) 525-7770 or www.spyderco.com. Fortunately, serrated edges can go a long time between sharpening.

TO PREVENT CORROSION Yes, stainless steel does rust—some alloys more than others. Rust attacks the thin edge first, so the knife gets dull before it looks really bad. Wash the blade with fresh water after every dive, and scrub it to remove the film of salt that will otherwise stay behind.

CAN YOU COAT THE BLADE TO KEEP SEAWATER OFF? You might coat it with silicone spray or grease, but of course this will wash off pretty quickly. Petroleum-based waterproof grease lasts longer, but will attack anything silicone it comes in contact with so be careful. And with either, the problem is to get anything to stick to the sharp edge itself.

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Conch Club Divers, www.conchclub.com, 800-327-3835, 727-323-8727
Divi Tiara Beach Resort, www.diviresorts.com, 800-367-3484, 305-451-1130
Island Air, www.islandaircayman.com, 345-949-5252
Little Cayman Beach Resort, www.littlecayman.com, 800-327-3835, 727-323-8727
Cayman Aggressor IV, www.aggressor.com, 800-348-2628, 504-385-2628
Paradise Villas/Divers, www.paradisevillas.com, 877-3-CAYMAN, 345-948-0001
Sam McCoy's Diving and Fishing Lodge, www.mccoyslodge.com.ky, 800-626-0496, 345-948-0026
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could be. It's short, the teeth are sharp fibergrabbers and the scallops are cut from both sides of the blade, making sharpening a chore. The sheath is a little better than the Titan's, however, with an easy release and a single-click engagement.



STATS Length and thickness with sheath: 10 inches by 1.3 inches. Blade length: 4 inches. Blade material: Titanium. Serration type: Coarse. Handle length: 4.5 inches. Price: IDI, \$69; SDM, \$90 to \$100. Contact: International Divers, (800) 257-2822; Sport Divers Manufacturing, (305) 947-5692 (for dealer information). Web: IDI: www.seaira.com.

OCEANIC PROBE & & &

This is a pretty good knife handicapped by a poor sheath. The blade is a conventional design, although the double-sided serrations won't be easy to sharpen. The handle is a big one that gives a good grip, and the guard is ample. But the sheath does not release smoothly. If you pull the knife at an angle, the line-cutting notch in the blade catches the sheath. Also, returning the knife to the sheath requires a hard push, and if the knife isn't straight, it may not engage the catch. Strap mounting only.



STATS Length and thickness with sheath: 10 inches by 1.3 inches. Blade length: 4 inches. Blade material: 420 stainless steel. Serration type: Coarse. Handle length: 5 inches. Price: \$49. Contact: Oceanic USA, (510) 562-0500. Web: www.oceanicusa.com.

OCEANIC TITANIUM &&&

This knife has an odd design. Serrated and plain sections share one edge of the blade, so each is short—only two inches. The serrations are the wavy style, which cut well, but are cut into both sides of the blade, so will be difficult to sharpen. The blunt end is sharpened too. The guard is merely a bulge in the profile of the blade, but has teeth to grip your thumb and fingers. The sheath grips mostly by friction and requires lots of force to withdraw and replace the knife. Be sure you push it in all the way. Holes in the perimeter of the sheath permit bolting it to your BC, and the whole package is very thin.



STATS Length and thickness with sheath: 10.4 inches by 1 inch. Blade length: 4 inches. Blade material: Titanium. Serration type: Medium, semi-wavy. Handle length: 5 inches. Price: \$120. Contact: Oceanic USA, (510) 562-0500. Web: www.oceanicusa.com.

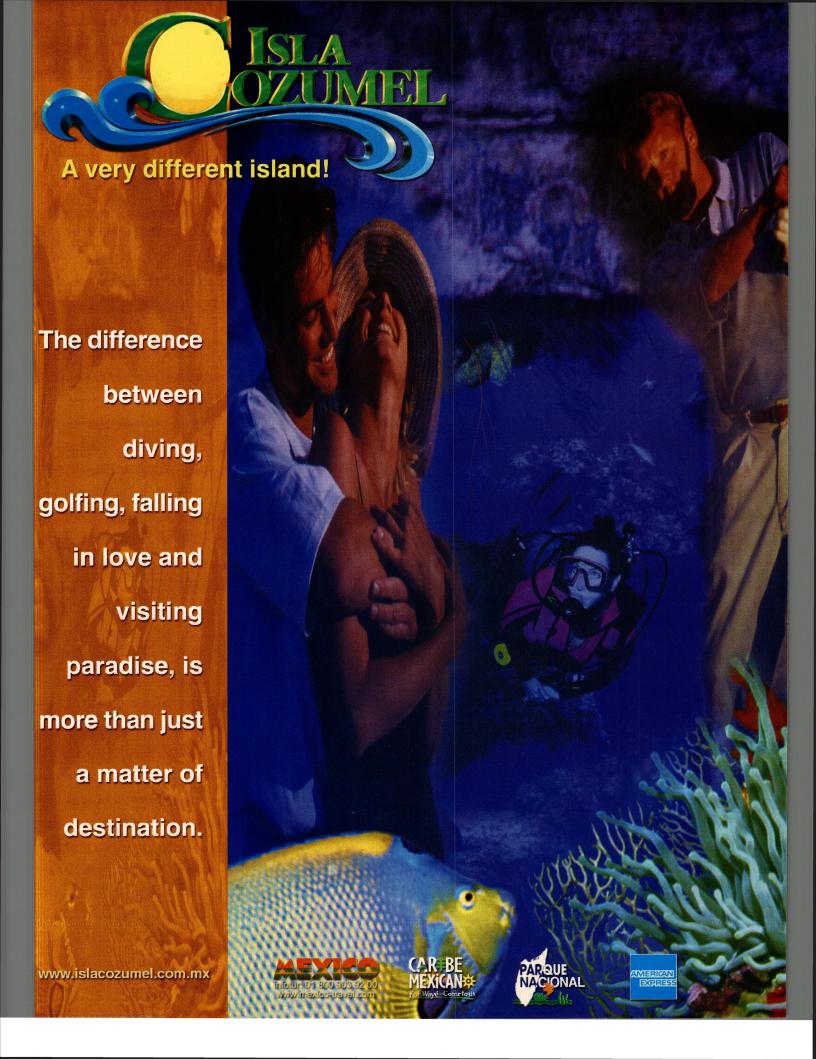
OCEANIC TIBURON & & & &

One of the best things about this knife is the guard, a sort of D-ring that fully encloses your fingers. It makes this knife the safest to use and the hardest to drop. The plain edge has lots of "belly," and appears to be slightly rough, because it slices rope far better than most other dive knives I tested. The serrated section is good, too, with rounded tips that don't snag fibers and the one-sided design that's easily sharpened. They function as monofilament cutters too. A bottle opener and nut turners are extras not often seen on a dive knife. The sheath is a good one with an easy release, positive engagement and a belt loop.



STATS Length and thickness with sheath: 10.2 inches by 1.4 inches. Blade length: 4 inches. Blade material: Stainless steel.

Serration type: Medium. Handle length: 5



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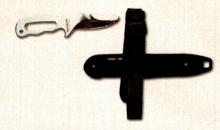
inches. **Price:** \$84. **Contact:** Oceanic USA, (510) 562-0500. **Web:** www.oceanicusa.com.

SCUBAPRO K-3 &&

This would be one of those too-small BC knives except that the handle is well-designed to give a secure grip. Hook your forefinger over the guard, which hooks against your second finger. Your thumb grips notches in the top of the handle. The "skeleton" handle is still likely to be

slippery, however. Wavy serrations plus some belly to the edge help it cut pretty well. The serrations are cut on one side of the blade, so you can sharpen them with a conventional stone or file. Releasing the knife from the sheath involves rotating a small knob 90 degrees, which may not be easy if you're wearing gloves and can't see the knife.

STATS Length and thickness with sheath: 6.8 inches by 0.8 inches. Blade length: 2

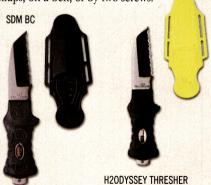


inches. Blade material: Stainless steel.
Serration type: Fine, wavy (only edge).
Handle length: 3.5 inches. Price: \$55.
Contact: Scubapro, (619) 402-1023. Web: www.jwa.com/scubapro.

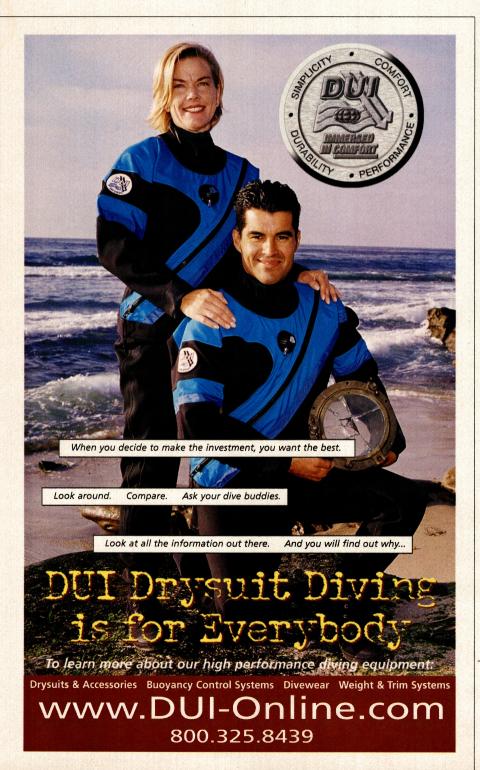
SPORT DIVERS MANUFACTURING BC KNIFE AND H2ODYSSEY THRESHER

\$ 6 6 C

A wavy serration on the single edge allows this knife to cut everything extremely well. The knife rips through rope and Kevlar, and snaps monofilament instantly. The blade is scalloped on one edge only, which would make sharpening easy except that edge is hollow-groundconcave. Using a flat stone will ruin it, so you'll have to sharpen the teeth individually with some tiny files or stones. On the other hand, a serrated blade doesn't require sharpening very often. The handle is short and the guard is low, so it seems that you're supposed to put your thumb and index finger over it. Fortunately, the first half-inch of the blade is not sharp. The sheath has a one-finger release, but the engagement is not foolproof. It can be mounted with straps, on a belt, or by two screws.



STATS Length and thickness with sheath: 7.3 inches by 1 inch. Blade length: 2.4 inches. Blade material: 420 stainless steel. Serration type: Wavy. Handle length: 3.5 inches. Price: Sport Divers Manufacturing, \$25; H2Odyssey, \$19. Contact: Sport Divers Manufacturing, (305) 947-5692 (for dealer information); H2Odyssey, (760) 599-4097. Web: H2Odyssey: www.h2odyssey.com.





A Better Idea: EMT Shears

In my tests, EMT shears cut everything easier and faster than any of the knives. The exception is the case of the rope wrapped tightly around the prop shaft, where you probably couldn't get a blade of the shears under the rope.

Otherwise, shears do a better job, with less risk of cutting you or your buddy. Maybe it's time to consider shears as your primary cutting tool, with a knife as a backup.

Two examples, almost identical, are:

SPORT DIVERS MANUFACTURING SEA SNIPS DEDE

These shears have large finger holes. You can get three fingers in, two with thick gloves on. The sheath is fabric, too, with a flap that folds over the handles and Velcros to the body of the sheath. Large loops allow it to be carried on a belt or with straps, or there's a plastic D-ring at one end.



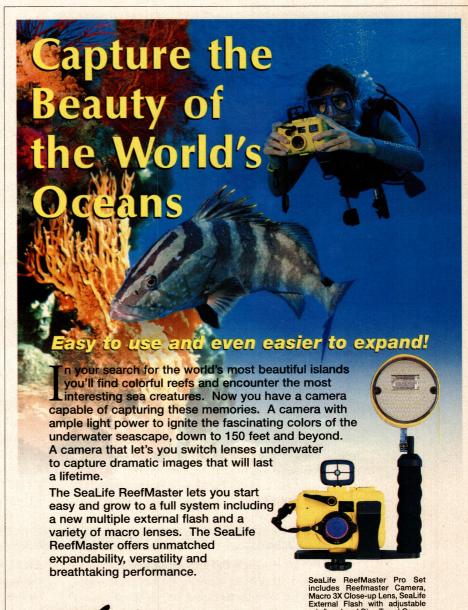
STATS Blade length: 1.7 inches. Blade material: 420 stainless steel. Serration type: Fine. Price: \$15. Contact: Sport Divers Manufacturing, (305) 947-5692 (for dealer information).

ZEAGLE DIVER TOOL KIT & & & &

A pair of shears and a Ranger knife in a neat, compact package. The shears, under the knife, are a little hard to get to, and the retaining strap, with a snap, won't fit if you return the shears to the sheath upside-down. The knife, also on a strap with a snap, is short but not stupid, because the handle is nearly full length and, though it's thin and slippery, the strap on the end gives your pinkie something to hang on to. The tiny blade has both plain and serrated edges, though I can't understand why the serrations weren't carried forward along nearly the full upper edge. I guess they wanted to retain that murderous look. Still, you'll use the shears most of the time.



STATS Length and thickness with sheath: 8.7 inches by 1.3 inches. Blade length: Knife, 2 inches; scissors, 1.7 inches. Blade material: 304 stainless steel. Serration type: Medium; fine on scissors. Handle length: Knife, 3.5 inches. Price: \$63. Contact: Zeagle Systems, (813) 782-5568. Web: www.zeagle.com.





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Edited by Patricia Wuest

New Year's Resolution: Spend Less, Dive More

Discounted rates and special gifts for RSD readers.



Rimini hathtub: Save \$624 with an off-season package at Bill & Nowdla Keefe's Bimini Undersea. [1]

Beguia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines



\$49 VALUE FOR RSD READERS

OPERATOR Dive Bequia. DEAL Package includes seven nights accommodations in apartments that are only a twominute walk from the dive shop and all restaurants in Bequia, taxes, service charges and transfers. Rodale's Scuba Diving readers receive a 10 percent discount. DIV-ING Ten dives, including all equipment. DATES Valid until Dec. 15, 2001. PRICE \$499 (before discount), dbl. occ. SAVINGS \$49 for RSD readers. CATCH You must

mention RSD Dive Special when you book to receive the discounted rate. CONTACT (784) 458-3504. E-mail: bobsax@caribsurf.com. Web: www.dive-bequia.com.

Bimini, Bahamas



10% SAVINGS FOR RSD READERS

OPERATOR Bill & Nowdla Keefe's Bimini Undersea. DEAL Off-Season Dive Package Special: During selected dates in January, the first guest pays regular price, while the second guest pays half price. The discount applies to both the land package and the airfare on Chalk's Seaplane. As an added bonus, Rodale's Scuba Diving readers receive an additional 10 percent off wild dolphin excursions and/or dives added to the base packages. DATES Jan. 3-31, 2001. PRICE Approximately \$1,872 (excluding airfare taxes) for two people. SAVINGS \$624 off the normal rate. CATCH You must mention RSD Dive Special when you book to get the 10 percent discount on the added excursions or dives. **CONTACT** (800) 348-4644 or (305) 653-5572. E-mail: biminiua@web2000.net. Web: www.biminiundersea.com.

Cayman Brac, Cayman Islands



\$20 VALUE FOR RSD READERS

RESORT Brac Reef Beach Resort. **DEAL** A guided trip to Cayman Brac March 17-24, 2001. Package includes seven nights lodging, taxes at the resort and all meals. Readers of Rodale's Scuba Diving also get a T-shirt when they book. **DIVING** Unlimited diving, tanks and weights are included. NOT INCLUDED Airfare, trip insurance, BC, regulator and

LIVE-ABOARD SAUINGS

PETER HUGHES OFFERS DISCOUNTS

Peter Hughes Diving is offering discounts on selected charters: Wind Dancer (Grand Turk): \$100 off Jan. 6-13 and Jan. 13-20, 2001. Sea Dancer (Providenciales): \$100 off Jan. 6-13, 13-20, 20-27 and Jan. 27-Feb. 3, 2001. Sun Dancer II (Palau): Up to \$500 off on Fall Fantasy trips, July 15-Aug. 5 and Sept. 9-Nov. 4, 2001. Tel: (800) 9-DANCER. E-mail: dancer@peterhughes.com. Web: www.peterhughes.com.

EXCEL RENAMED RED SEA AGGRESSOR

The Aggressor Fleet has changed the name of the Excel to the Red Sea Aggressor. The live-aboard will be in dry dock from January until March 2001; however, in fall 2001, Red Sea Aggressor will have a low season rate of \$1,495 (normally \$1,895) on charters Nov. 3 through Dec. 22, 2001. Tel: (800) 348-2628. E-mail: info@aggressor.com. Web: www.aggressor.com.





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wetsuit rental, night dive and gratuities. Night dives available for \$50 per person, if available. **DATES** Final payment is due Feb. 1, 2001. **PRICE** \$1,316 per diver, dbl. occ. Non-diver rates are available if sharing with a diver. **VALUE** The T-shirt is a \$20 value for *RSD* readers. **CATCH** You must mention *RSD* Dive Special when you book to receive the T-shirt. **CONTACT** House of Pelican, Inc., (888) SIT-TIME or (303) 424-4062. E-mail: Pelicantry@aol.com.

Web: http://members.aol.com/pelicantry/.

Costa Rica



\$117 VALUE FOR RSD READERS

OPERATOR Bill Beard's Diving Safaris. **DEAL AND DIVING** 2001 Summer Special: When readers of *Rodale's Scuba Diving* buy a package that includes six nights accommodations and five days of two-tank diving, they will get

one dive day and one night at Sol Playa Hermosa Hotel free. Package includes breakfast, local boat dives, guide, tanks, weights and snacks on board dive boat. **DATES** Valid from May 1 through Sept. 24, 2001. **PRICE** \$639 per person, dbl. occ. **SAVINGS** \$117 for *RSD* readers. **CATCH** You must mention *RSD* Dive Special when you book to receive the free hotel night and dive day. **CONTACT** (877) 853-0538. Email: costarica@diveres.com. Web: www.bill beardcostarica.com.

Curação



\$25 VALUE FOR RSD READERS

RESORT Princess Beach Resort. DEAL Five nights accommodations, breakfast daily and airport transfers. Rodale's Scuba Diving readers receive a \$25 discount. DIVING Eight boat dives and unlimited shore diving. EXTRAS Discounted airfare available (most gateways available). DATES Valid until April 14, 2001. PRICE \$742 per person, dbl. occ. (before discount). SAVINGS \$25 for RSD readers. CATCH You must mention RSD Dive Special when you book to get the discounted rate. CONTACT Caribbean Adventures, (800) 433-3483 or (954) 467-0821. E-mail: margo@worlddive.com. Web: www.worlddive.com.

Fiji

LIVE-ABOARD Fiji Aggressor / Aggressor Fleet.

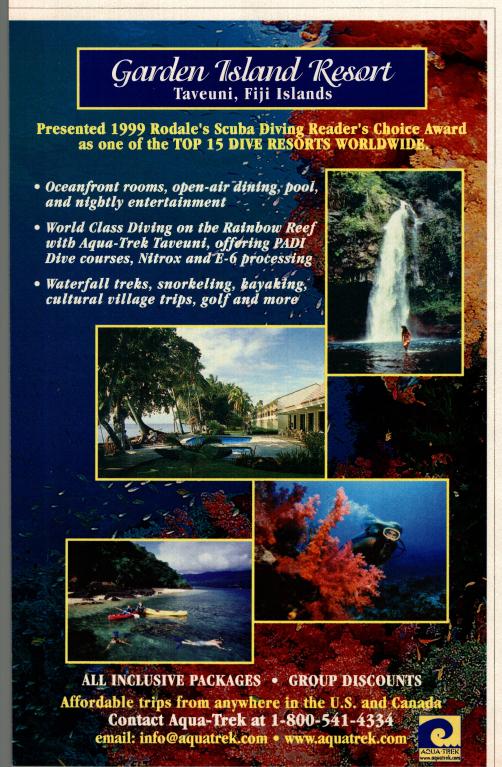
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all 2001 Fiji Aggressor charters. Seven-day charters depart from Nadi. Dive itinerary includes many famed Fiji sites-E-6, Hi-8, Namena, Wakaya and Gau. DATES Valid until Jan. 5, 2002. PRICE \$1,995 per person, dbl. occ., \$400 off the normal package price of \$2,395. CON-TACT (800) 348-2628. E-mail: info@aggressor. com. Web: www.aggressor.com.

Key West, Florida



\$20 VALUE FOR RSD READERS

OPERATOR Bonsai Diving. DEAL AND DIVING One night accommodations in an historic inn and one two-tank dive trip to the reefs and wrecks of the Dry Tortugas with an instructor guide. Picnic at Fort Jefferson included. Readers of Rodale's Scuba Diving will get a T-shirt. DATES Valid until May 1, 2001. PRICE \$335 per person, dbl. occ. Local wreck and reef diving also available at \$119 per person, dbl. occ. VALUE The T-shirt is a \$20 value. CATCH You must mention RSD Dive Special when you book to get the T-shirt. CONTACT (305) 294-2921. E-mail: divkw@aol.com. Web: www.bonsaidiv ing.com.

Matangi Island, Fiji



\$25 VALUE FOR RSD READERS

RESORT Matangi Island Resort. DEAL AND **DIVING** Matangi Island Resort is a privately owned, 240-acre resort in Fiji's Northern Islands. This special package is an all-inclusive, eight-day, seven-night stay in a standard beachfront bure, including five days of diving, all (continued on pg. 58)

PRICELINE BIDDING SECRETS REVEALED

Name-your-price giant Priceline.com sold over 2.5 million round-trip airline tickets in the first half of 2000 and booked about one million hotel room nights. While most travelers saved money using the online service, "most could probably still save more," says budget-travel guru Jens Jurgen in a special report that reveals his unique bidding strategies to extract the maximum savings from name-your-price web sites. Copies of Jurgen's "Travel Savings Report" are \$6.50 for one, \$10 for two. E-mail: tce@jensjurgen.com. Web: www.whytravel alone.com.

LIVE-ABOARD SAUINGS

AQUA CAT TO CRUISE BAHAMAS OUT ISLANDS \$100 VALUE FOR RSD READERS

Readers of Rodale's Scuba Diving will get a \$100 discount off any September 2001 cruise on the live-aboard Aqua Cat if booked by April 1, 2001. Aqua Cat will offer cruises to the Bahamas Out Islands beginning July 2001. The 102-foot-long catamaran will accommodate 22 guests in 11 ocean-view cabins, each with private shower and head. The vessel will have E-6 processing, a video lab and nitrox. Charters will depart from Nassau each Saturday for eight-day trips to the remote islands of the Exumas. Contact: (888) 327-9600, e-mail: info@aquacatcruises.com, web: www.aguacatcruises.com. Be sure to mention RSD Dive Special to get the \$100 discount.

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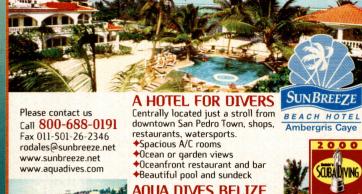
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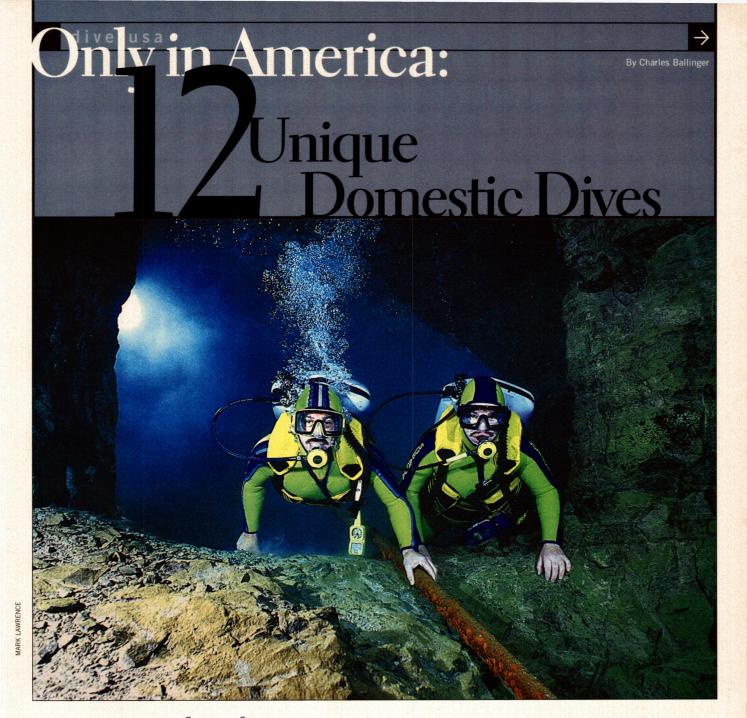




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orget spacious skies, amber waves of grain and even those shining seas. What makes America beautiful to thousands of divers are the off-thebeaten-path adventure dives in some of the unlikeliest places—including these unique gems.

Bonne Terre Mine

LOCATION Bonne Terre, Mo., about a hour south of St. Louis on Hwy. 67.

ADVENTURE QUOTIENT Dive the only aqua-subway system

in the world—seven miles of abandoned mine tunnels and one billion gallons of crystal-clear water that run directly beneath the town.

PROFILE For more than a generation, Bonne Terre Mine produced ton after ton of lead. When the mine was abandoned in 1962, groundwater seeped in and filled the miles of enormous caverns, tunnels and shafts. You'll be diving deep beneath a train station, a funeral parlor, a pharmacy, a bank, and even City Hall. There's plenty to see in these mines—old mining equipment, train tracks,

Seven miles of abandoned mine shafts, tunnels and caverns provide 24 underwater trails for divers to explore in Bonne Terre Mine. [1]

ore carts, shovels and steam-powered jack-hammers.

Dive tours are fully escorted by safety divers. Be prepared to demonstrate your skill level by buddy breathing with a guide and flooding your mask before embarking on the first of the 24 progressive dive tours that range in skill level from basic "open water" caverns to cave-like tunnels.

While halogen lights simulate the open water experience, subterranean diving is not for everyone. The water is clear (60 to 100 feet of visibility), but chilly (55 degrees yearround). Only the guides are allowed lights in order to discourage freelance exploring. Because of the cold water, artificial light and cavern/cave conditions, this is an advanced dive for competent divers only.

HOW TO DIVE IT Bonne Terre is open weekends year-round, but diving is by reservation only. Contact: West End Diving, (314) 731-5003. Web: www.2dive.com.

The Cooper River

LOCATION About 45 minutes west of Charleston, S.C.

ADVENTURE QUOTIENT Black-water diving for fossils and whatever else might turn up in the river bed.

PROFILE Diving in the Cooper River's tanninstained water is an eerie experience. At 28 feet, it's pitch black and even with a light, you'll only be able to see what's right in front of your face. Sound awful? It is, until you flatten out on the hardpan floor and scan crevices and troughs. Here you'll find dislodged artifacts and fossils including shark's teeth and whale ribs, some about seven million years old.

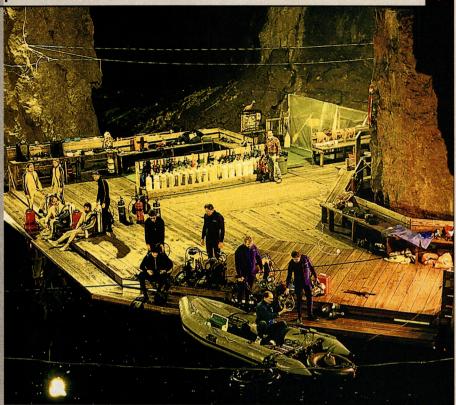
River access is provided through the local dive shop in Goose Creek. Divers assemble at a boat landing for the three- to 10-mile ride up the river. Timing is important since the river is dived at flood tide. The guides know the best places to dive and will put you in a safe spot.

Ascents and descents can be tricky and are best done while staring at your gauges to avoid disorientation. A goody bag is a must.

HOW TO DIVE IT Contact Freedom At Depth Dive Shop, (843) 553-8009. Web: www.freedo matdepth.com.

Tailrace Diving

LOCATION Garrison Dam, an hour north of Bismarck, N.D.; The Chute below Lake Oahe Dam, just outside of Pierre, S.D.; Colorado



The dive platform is located more than 100 feet directly below the town of Bonne Terre, Mo. Halogen lights strung throughout the caverns and caves of the mine provide ambient light. Only guides are allowed to carry dive lights in order to discourage freelance exploring.

\[\begin{align*} \Tau \]

Bonus: Three More Unusual Sites

JULES' UNDERSEA LODGE/EMERALD LAGOON Mangrove-lined Emerald Lagoon might best be described as an aquatic theme park dedicated to dive science. The centerpiece is Jules' Undersea Lodge, a deep-sea research habitat converted into the world's first and only underwater hotel.

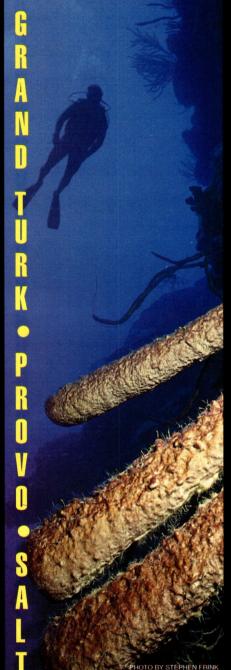
Located in Key Largo, Fla., just off Hwy. 1 at mile marker 103, the lodge sleeps groups up to six, and NASA uses it occasionally to simulate conditions of living in space, but it's also popular with adventurous honeymooners.

Divers use an extensive system of hookah lines to visit the hotel for day visits or overnight stays and to explore the lagoon's numerous quarry-like attractions, which include an archaeological exhibit and second habitat structure set aside as a marine lab. Contact: **Jules' Undersea Lodge**, (305) 451-2353. Web: www.jul.com.

MT. STORM LAKE, W. VA. This diver-friendly lake has a large parking lot, easy shore diving access, underwater platforms and warning signs to keep divers away from the dam. But what makes Mt. Storm unique is the water temperature—it's about 20 degrees warmer than anywhere else, and on cold days the lake steams like a witch's cauldron. The reason? Mt. Storm Lake is a man-made cooling pond for a massive coal-fired power plant. It's located off Rte. 42 in northern West Virginia near the Maryland border. Just look for the steam cloud. Contact: Breathe Deep Scuba and Sports, (301) 387-8035.

BONNEVILLE SEABASE, UTAH An inland sea stocked with tropical species from angelfish to nurse sharks located just west of Salt Lake City? Yep. The same geologic forces that help create the Great Salt Lake provide warm, saltwater ponds that are close enough to Caribbean conditions to support a diverse mix of ocean fish—from groupers to nurse sharks. It's near Grantsville, Utah, about 40 miles west of Salt Lake City. Contact: **Bonneville Seabase**, (435) 884-3874. Web: www.seabase.net.

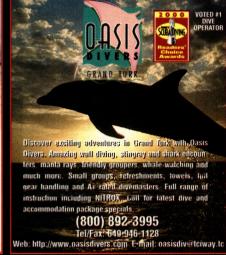
Beautiful by Nature.

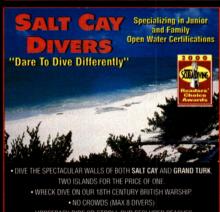




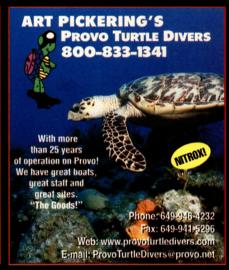
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River, Willow Beach, Ariz.

ADVENTURE QUOTIENT Drift diving on steroids. Yee-ha!

PROFILE In case you're not familiar with the concept, tailrace diving is drift diving in the rapid outflow of a major dam. The result is a head-first underwater bobsled run that makes whitewater rafting seem like a weenie sport.

The drill is to drop into the middle of the current and cruise downriver just a few feet above the bottom watching out for what's ahead and dodging obstacles. Depending on where you are, you might see animal bones, schools of amused fish, grass fields, caverns or anything else that might end up in a river.

Depths can vary from a few feet to more than 40, but at all three of these sites, you can count on the water being very cold. Wearing extra neoprene will also help shield you from bumps and snags along the way.

HOW TO DIVE IT These dives are for advanced divers only and best done with knowledgeable guides from a local dive shop. Contact:

North Dakota: Scuba One Dive Shop, (800)

454-3483. Web: www.scubaone.com.

South Dakota: Pierre Scuba Center, (605) 945-1845.

Arizona: Drew's Dam Divers, (800) 291-2650. Web: www.damdivers.com.

Homestead Crater

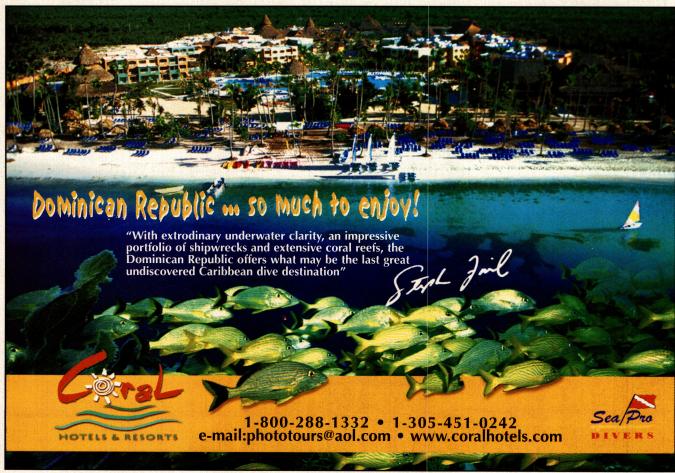
LOCATION Homestead Resort, about an hour east of Salt Lake City, Utah, near Heberville.

ADVENTURE QUOTIENT Another Journey to the Center of the Earth experience, only this time you're diving in a volcanic crater instead of a mine.

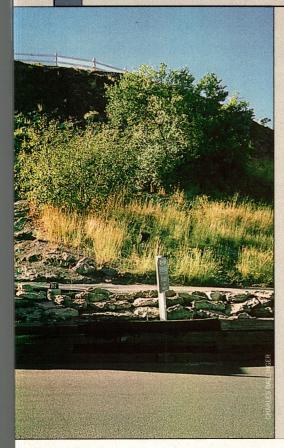
PROFILE The Homestead Crater is a natural hot spring inside a volcanic dome. The grotto is 60 feet across and comes complete with a small opening at the top. Below is 70 feet of clear, green and unusually hot water—between 90 and 96 degrees even in the dead of winter when snow is falling through the window above.

A 100-foot tunnel cuts into the base of the crater, making room for a tiny dive shop and providing access to a floating dock where









More Great American Diving

Can't get enough of that domestic stuff? Neither can we.

50 DIVES, 50 STATES. Point your browser to **www.dive50states.com**, a web site chronicling Charles Ballinger's 15,000-mile journey to every corner of the nation in search of the American dive experience. A book on the project, *American Adventure Underwater: Fifty Dives in Fifty States* is in the works (see web for details). "Diving is a sport of exploration," says Ballinger. "That's why I like new diving experiences. It keeps the sport fresh and exciting."

UNDERWATER USA. This archive on the **www.scubadiving.com** web site includes past stories from *RSD*.

DIVER TO DIVER. Read the latest trip reports and peruse the photos from *RSD* readers on the message board at **www.scubadiving.com**. Better yet—post your own.

divers suit up, wearing as little as their modesty allows.

Attractions inside the bell-shaped crater include a suspended wagon wheel and mineral deposits lining the walls. The crater has plenty of natural and artificial lighting, but a dive light is useful.

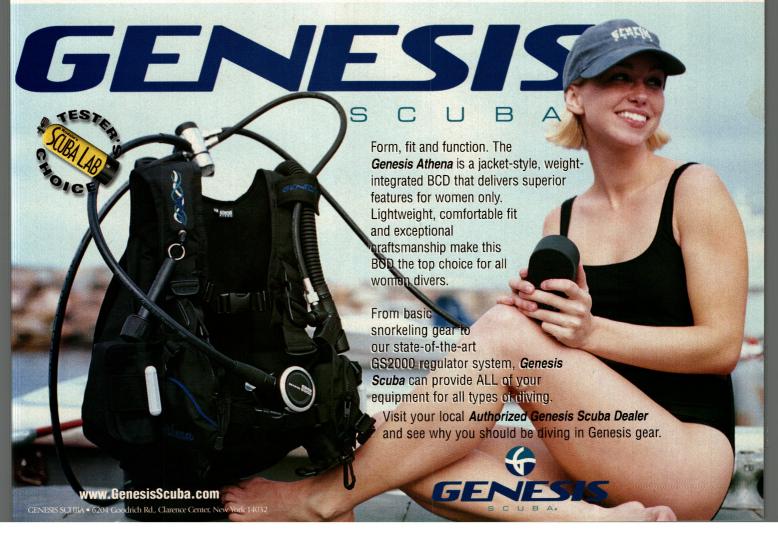
HOW TO DIVE IT The crater is open year-round to divers, swimmers and guests of the resort, so in the winter you may have to share it with ski bums taking a soak between runs. Contact Homestead Crater, (800) 327-7220. Web: www.homesteadresort.com.

Yellowstone Lake

LOCATION Under the cold, clear waters of Yellowstone Lake, Wyo.

ADVENTURE QUOTIENT Diving at 7,600 feet of altitude is an adventure in itself. Throw in underwater geysers and "mystery spires," and things get real interesting. The topside scenery ain't bad either.

PROFILE Besides the standard wrecks, this lake offers underwater geysers and some strange



 \rightarrow

lava-like spires that scientists can't quite figure out. Rising up to 20 feet off the lake bottom, they look something like rough stone chimneys. They may in fact be the skeletal remains of living creatures. Whatever they are, you're unlikely to see them anywhere else.

This is a cold-water, high-altitude dive for advanced divers. Bring a dry suit, take it easy and don't push any limits. And don't touch the spires.

HOW TO DIVE IT Contact Teton Aquatic Supply in Jackson. They keep a boat at the lake. Tel: (800) 529-2501 or (307) 733-3127. E-mail: don@coralstar.com.

The Missile Silo

LOCATION About 20 minutes southwest of Abilene, Texas.

ADVENTURE QUOTIENT Remember the Cold War? You will on this underwater tour of what was once a secure military facility.

PROFILE In 1962, this underground bunker contained the blunt instrument of U.S. foreign policy—an Atlas F ICBM sporting the fire-

power of 50 Hiroshima bombs. The nukes are long gone and today the silo contains 130 feet of peaceful, clear groundwater.

From the Texas prairie above, a long set of stairs descends to what was once a top-secret military facility. Pass through several blast doors to the old launch control bunker, then proceed through a tunnel to the immense concrete silo—52 feet across and 18 stories deep.

The water in the silo is 130 feet deep. There's a tangled pile of metal debris at the bottom and the missile control station, a tin shack structure that sticks out from the silo wall at 30 to 60 feet. The water is a constant 61 degrees and clarity is about 60 feet. You'll need a 7mm wetsuit with hood and gloves and want a dive light to explore the depths of the silo.

HOW TO DIVE IT The silo is open weekends by appointment only. For schedules, contact The Underwater Connection in Abilene, (915) 677-2822, or Family Scuba Center in Midland, (915) 686-7333. Web: www.familyscuba.com.





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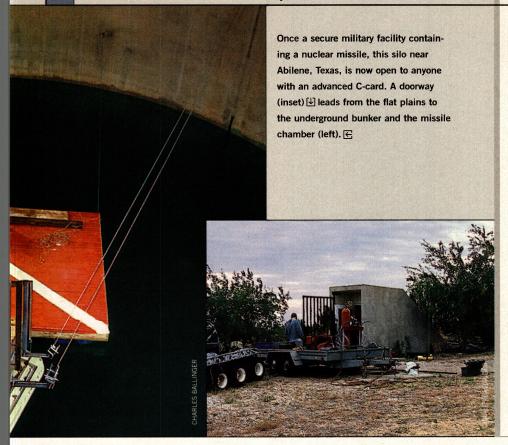
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Clear Lake

LOCATION About 2 1/2 hours southwest of Portland, Ore.

ADVENTURE QUOTIENT This lake offers visibility beyond anything imaginable. It'll make your swimming pool look like mud. But what's there to see? Plenty, including brilliant yellow algae fields, lava flows, a sunken forest and geothermal vents that spew a milky, cloud-like substance.

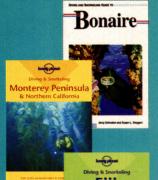
PROFILE Clear Lake is in the mountains of Oregon and the water is cold—very cold. Most of the bottom is covered with volcanic ash, which persuades some there isn't much to see. Not so. You'll need a dry suit. A sealed regulator is highly advised. The lake is an altitude dive at 4,000 feet, but it's only about 45 feet deep. The very cold water makes it an advanced dive, however, and good buoyancy skills are essential over a volcanic ash bottom. HOW TO DIVE IT Contact Scuba Unlimited in Portland, (800) 293-3483.



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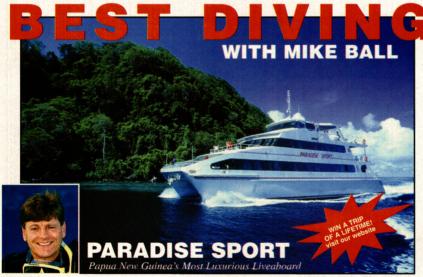
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(continued from pg. 49)

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10. Truk

11. Venezuela

12. Maldives

11. B; 12. H Answers: 1. D; 2. C; 3. F; 4. G; 5. A; 6. 1; 7. E; 8. K; 9. L; 10. I;

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graphic Expeditions record coral growth and species identification. Rodale's Scuba Diving readers get a \$50 discount. DATES June 17-23, 2001. PRICE \$2,695 (before discount), dbl. occ. SAVINGS \$50 for RSD readers. CATCH You must mention RSD Dive Special when you book to get the discounted rate. CONTACT Oceanographic Expeditions, (504) 488-1573. Email: Seascience@aol.com. Web: www.seascience.com.

Roatan, Bay Islands



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St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands



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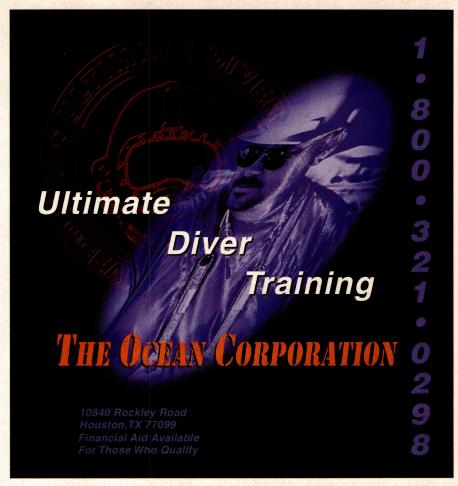
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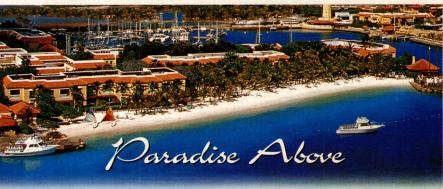
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From Venezuela's famous oyster beds come new pearls the most bizarre collection of creatures ever discovered in the Caribbean.

n 1500, the New World's first settlement, Nueva Cadiz, was established on Isla de Cubagua, a spit of arid rock and sand located between the Caribbean coastline of Venezuela and Margarita Island. This uninviting cactuscovered site was chosen because of its proximity to a natural wonder-the richest pearl oyster beds known to the European world at the time. Christopher Columbus had discovered them the year before, on his third voyage to the New World, when he noted Indians in the area adorned with pearls.

By 1530, the bountiful beds were producing an amazing 820 pounds of pearls a month. Harvests were so productive that virtually all the pearls found in the crowns, jewelry and apparel of 16th-century European royalty and aristocracy came from Nueva Cadiz.

The good times ended in 1541 when an earthquake and subsequent tidal wave destroyed the settlement. The once-prosperous outpost was never rebuilt; 40 years of unrestrained harvesting had exhausted the pearl beds to the point of collapse. To this day they have never recovered enough to be a commercially viable enterprise. The collapse stands as the New World's first conservation caveat if you overfish a marine population, it may never recover.

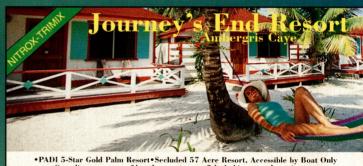
Bottom-Dwelling Beauties

Five hundred years later, I've also come to Cubagua because of a natural wonder: the most eye-popping collection of bizarre bottom-dwelling marine creatures yet discovered in the Caribbean. The tiny island's undersea world contrasts sharply with the clear, warm, coral-studded waters The female resh pikeblenny is very territorial, aggressively chasing and fighting other females that intrude on her home turf. I spotted these two (above) engaged in an altercation that lasted less than a minute. But the ferocity of the combat left little doubt that this was serious business, with the intruder being chased from the area.









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destination unknown: cubagua

of typical Caribbean dive destinations. Cubagua's cool, green waters force me to don a wetsuit with hood and squint through visibility that hovers near 30 feet. And the bottom, a combination of dark sand, silt, mud and rock, appears so uninviting that it would send most divers back to the boat early with a tank full of air. But I soon find that for those with a penchant for adventure and a touch of the exotic, the muck diving of Cubagua offers a rich array of wonders.

Two Sites, Many Dives

The known dive sites at Isla Cubagua are limited to only two, a deep 70-foot dive on a silty rock-strewn rise in Charagato Bay and the other on sand in 20 to 40 feet around the wreck of the Santa Anna ferry and the tugboat that tried to rescue her. Perfect for a two- or threetank day. I asked Magdalena Font, director of the dive operation servicing Isla Cubagua, if she knew of other sites. "We've explored a number of areas and found lots more muck, but none with the abundance of marine life we find at these two sites."

If you're the kind of diver who likes to go slow and look for all the little things, there's enough diving here to fill two or three days. And if you're a fish and macro photographer, you'll never want to leave.

Los Frailes: Oysters and Barbecue

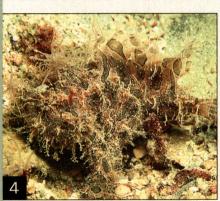
For divers who want to give muck diving a try, but aren't sure they want to commit for a whole week dive vacation, there is an escape valve. The Los Frailes islets, 10 miles northeast of Margarita, offer some very good reefs in clear water and the remnants of some of those famed oyster beds. Several dive operators make a day of it with a two-tank dive and beach barbecue lunch between dives.

Farrallone Rock: Invert City

Divers can also make a quick couple of morning dives around Farrallone Rock, which offers good shallow diving around several more oyster beds. The oyster beds have a mind-boggling variety of colorful marine invertebrates associated with them. In a single, one-square-foot area, a dozen different species and colors of colonial tunicates can be found, along with several colors of encrusting sponges, green mat zoanthids, green grape algae and a half-dozen pearl oysters.











Heading the list of strange inhabitants at Cubagua are two species of toadfish found only in the extreme southern Caribbean. The shy sapo bacon (1) hides in dark recesses, extending only its ugly barbel-chinned head. The sapo cano (2) camouflages itself by burying its body in sand to wait for unsuspecting prey, often leaving only its bulging eyes and mouth exposed

Other unusual fish that are found throughout the Caribbean, but rarely on reefs, include the shortnose batfish (3) and striated frogfish (4). The bandtailed robinfish (5), a foot long or more, uses its modified, finger-like ventral fins to "walk" along the bottom while moving stones to expose prey. Many members of the scorpionfish family are present, including a variety of barbfish (6) that is a stunning blood red.







The black-ringed goby (7), which I consider the most beautiful goby in the Caribbean and perhaps the world, also lives in these waters. It is encircled by black rings, has a brilliant yellow head and neon blue body. Running a close second in a beauty contest is the male red banner blenny (8). It resides in small holes, normally extending only its dull black head. However, when attempting to attract a mate, it extends its body with flared dorsal fin to display its brilliant red, white-edged

Dive Drill, Margaritaville

All diving is done out of Margarita Island on day boats. This large island (355 square miles, population 320,000) is home to a thriving, modern tourist industry that caters primarily to Europeans and wealthy South Americans. Beautiful, modern high-rise hotels, excellent restaurants, nightclubs, casinos, duty-free shopping and world-famous Playa el Agua beach combine to make the largest city, Porlamar, an attractive destination for any sun-loving tourist. There are one or more daily flights directly to European cities, but only two direct flights a week to the United States. If you want to fly on a day other than Wednesday or Saturday, you have to go through the hassle of connecting through Caracas on the mainland.

There are several dive operators in Margarita, each catering exclusively to one of the offshore islands. Operators pick up divers in the morning at their hotels, drive to their dive boat's port, and return them after the dives. This service is included in the price of the dives, as is lunch in most cases. They operate European-

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destination unknown: cubagua

style, diving only two tanks a day. However, we found with a group as small as four to six we could often negotiate for a private boat with three-tank days. Don't expect the modern dive boats found at most Caribbean destinations. Instead, sturdy fishing boats are pressed into dive service whenever there are customershowever, the boats are comfortable and shaded, and the service is excellent. The fishermen captains seem to enjoy the change of pace, and English-speaking native divernasters are eager to show off their unique marine life.





Dive Operators

ISLA CUBAGUA Yuriteri Diving, 011-58-95-69-2254; fax 011-58-95-62-0909; Email: okimai@telcel.net.ve

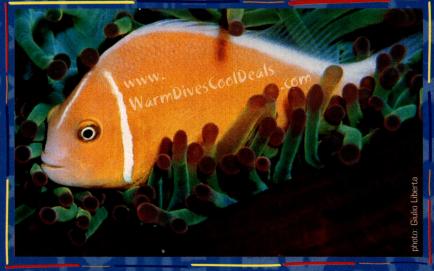
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FARRALLONE ROCK Margarita Divers, 011-58-95-64-2350

banner marking. The juvenile (9) of this species is equally beautiful with a translucent body, yellow head and pink cheeks. In its transparent dorsal fin you can see the subtle shading of the red and white banner starting to develop. The highly variable, but attractive chameleon blenny (10) can be red to orange, green, brown or black. All three of these striking species are found only in the coastal waters of Venezuela and Colombia.



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Fish are not the sole attraction at Cubagua. There are also many marine invertebrates that are rarely encountered elsewhere. I found two species of nudibranchs and two sea hares that

GETTING THERE Aeropostal (888-912-8466) offers direct flights to Margarita out of Miami on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

LANGUAGE Spanish, and it helps to know more than a little. Outside of major hotels, dive shops and other touristoriented businesses, English may not be spoken.

MONEY MATTERS The local currency is the Venezuelan bolivar. Aggressive inflation means exchange rates can vary day by day. U.S. currency isn't always accepted by merchants, so you will need a mix of dollars, bolivars, traveler's checks and credit cards.

RESTAURANTS Add a 10 percent surcharge to all checks. Customers are expected to tip an additional five to 10 percent as a reward for good service.

DOCUMENTS You need a valid passport (one that's at least six months from expiring) and a return ticket. You will be issued a tourist card good for 90 days on arrival. Keep it. You have to turn it back in when you leave. There is a \$40 departure tax that must be paid in currency.



I had never seen before; including the unident sea hare (11). This juvenile ragged sea hare (12), has a beautiful pattern of spots and fleshy tabs extending from its body.

Margarita Island/Cubagua

ELECTRICITY 110 volts, 60 cycles, AC, the same standard as the U.S.

CLIMATE Temperatures are generally between 75F and 80F, peaking in the upper 90Fs in summer and dropping as low as the upper 50Fs in winter. The May-to-November rainy season does not generally affect the offshore islands.

WATER CONDITIONS Thanks to the influence of a nearby ocean trench, Cubagua's water temps stay in the upper 60Fs to low 70Fs year-round. Elsewhere, expect water temperatures in the low to mid-70Fs in winter, up to the low 80Fs in summer. Visibility on Cubagua's muck sites maxes out at around 30 feet.

GETTING AROUND Rental cars and cabs are available on Margarita Island.

SAFETY For the latest information on security issues, consult the State Department consular information sheet on Venezuela at http://travel.state.gov/travel_warn ings.html.

FOR MORE INFO Contact the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington, D.C., (202) 342-2214. On the web: www.embavenez-us.org.





Readers' Choice

Getting good advice on dive destinations is like squeezing into a decade-old wetsuit—difficult, exhausting and sometimes downright painful. Everybody's an expert, and there are so many people singing places' praises—glossy brochures, slick marketing offices, suave travel agents ... even friends and family join the chorus.

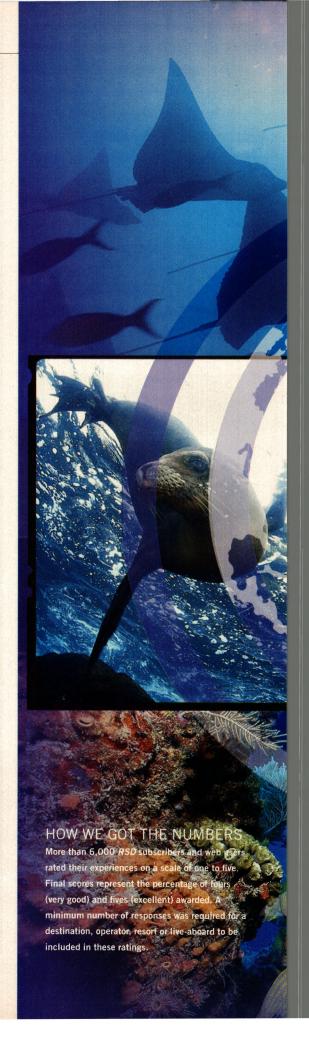
TOP 100

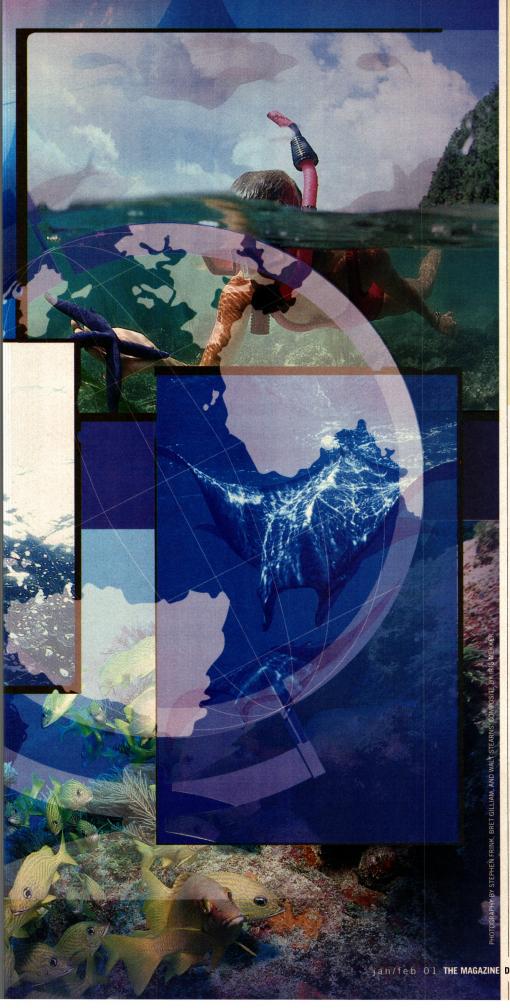
Wouldn't it be great to have a summary of the honest opinions and recommendations of more than 6,000 globetrotting divers? Good news. You're looking at it—the 8th Annual Top 100 Readers' Choice Awards. In our annual survey of *RSD* readers, you'll find the destinations with the best marine life, water conditions, reefs and wrecks. You'll also get the inside scoop on the best live-aboards, the dive operations with the friendliest crews, the resorts with the comfiest beds—straight from divers who've been there.

As usual, this year's survey included a number of exotic destinations—from Acapulco to Zanzibar. Unfortunately, we can't always report on them. To be included in the Top 100, a destination must be rated by at least 25 divers. This ensures the ratings are statistically valid, but it also means some high-scoring destinations are left off the list.

Cuba, for example, came close, but no cigar, garnering 16 surveys. Had it gotten enough, the country would have ranked high overall and for the health of its reefs, advanced diving and value. Trips to Guanaja, an old favorite in the Bay Islands of Honduras, were down. The island received just 14 surveys, but nearly all of them gave the island high scores for macro life, value and overall categories. Barbados received 14 votes and would have fared well in the overall rankings, value, beginner and advanced diving categories and even wreck diving, thanks to the massive *Stavronikita*. Finally, Venezuela—the nation with the longest Caribbean coast—received only a dozen surveys, but would have scored well for fish life and health of its marine environment.

We hope next year we'll be ranking these destinations along with the rest. But for now, we offer this year's winners. Drum roll, please ...





The Gold List

TOP DIVE DESTINATION

Galapagos Islands	100
Sipadan, Malaysia	100
Truk, Micronesia	100

TOP DIVE OPERATOR

Sam's Dive Tours, Palau, Micro	nesia 97.6
--------------------------------	------------

TOP LIVE-ABOARD

Odyssey, Truk, Micronesia 98.4

TOP RESORT

Presidente Inter-Continental,

Cozumel, Mexico 92.2

TOP DIVE OPERATOR STAFF

Sam's Dive Tours, Palau, Micronesia 100

TOP LIVE-ABOARD STAFF

MV Spree, Freeport, Texas 98.9

REPEAT PERFORMANCE PLACES YOU'D RETURN TO

It's one thing to say you like a place. But we wanted to know if you'd actually spend your hard-earned greenbacks to go back. As any businessman worth his pinstripes will tell you, the best customer is a repeat customer. Here are the top destinations in the world, based on the percentage of respondents who said that they would return:

Caribbean/Atlantic

1. British Virgin Islands	100%
2. Cozumel, Mexico	97.7%
3. Bermuda	97.1%
4. Cayman Brac and Little Cayman	95.7%
5. Bonaire	95.6%

Pacific and Indian Ocean

1. Kauai, Hawaii	100%
(tie) Yap, Micronesia	100%
(tie) Truk, Micronesia	100%
(tie) Galapagos Islands	100%
(tie) Sipadan, Malaysia	100%

North America

1. British Columbia	100%
2. Islamorada and Tavernier, Fla.	Keys 98%
3. Channel Islands, Calif.	97.5%

4. Flower Garden Banks, Gulf of Mexico 96.3% 95.5%

5. Marathon, Fla. Keys



Destinations BEST OVERALL

CARIBBEAN/ATLANTIC		6. Yap, Micronesia	96.1
1. Cayman Brac and Little Cayman	96.4	7. French Polynesia	95.2
2. Cozumel, Mexico	93.7	8. Cocos Island, Costa Rica	93.3
3. British Virgin Islands	91.2	9. Manado, Indonesia	92.3
4. Utila, Bay Islands, Honduras	90.5	10. Big Island, Hawaii	91.5
5. Bonaire	90.4		
6. Grand Turk and Salt Cay,		NORTH AMERICA	
Turks & Caicos	86.7	1. British Columbia	92.9
(tie) San Salvador, Bahamas	86.7	2. Flower Garden Banks, Gulf of Mexico	89.2
8. Ambergris Caye, Belize	84.4	3. North Carolina	88.5
9. Grand Cayman	83.9	4. Washington state	85.0
10. U.S. Virgin Islands	83.1	5. Islamorada and Tavernier, Fla. Keys	84.1
		6. Channel Islands, Calif.	82.6
PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEAN		7. Southeast Florida*	82.4
1. Galapagos Islands	100	8. Marathon, Fla. Keys	80.0
(tie) Sipadan, Malaysia	100	9. Key Largo, Fla. Keys	75.8
(tie) Truk, Micronesia	100	10. Key West, Fla. Keys	70.8
4. Palau, Micronesia	96.3	* For the purposes of these listings, "Southeas	st
5. Papua New Guinea	96.2	Florida" is Broward, Dade and Palm Beach co	unties.

Best Value

CARIBBEAN/ATLANTIC

1. Cozumel, Mexico	91.3
2. Utila, Bay Islands, Honduras	86.4
3. Ambergris Caye, Belize	81.8
4. Bimini, Bahamas	81.3
5. Roatan, Bay Islands, Honduras	80.1

PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEAN

TACITIC AND INDIAN OCLAN	
1. Galapagos Islands	91.7
2. Yap, Micronesia	90.6
3. Truk, Micronesia	88.9
4. Sipadan, Malaysia	87.5
5. Fiji	82.3

NORTH AMERICA

1. Dritish Columbia	92.9
2. Channel Islands, Calif.	91.5
3. Flower Garden Banks, Gulf of Mex	kico 90.4
4. Islamorada and Tavernier, Fla. Key	ys 79.7
5. Southeast Florida	79.1

Best Fish Life

CARIBBEAN/ATLANTIC

1. Cayman Brac and Little Cayman	92.3
2. Utila, Bay Islands, Honduras	90.5
3. Bonaire	89.3
4. Belize atolls	87.3
5. Bimini, Bahamas	84.4

PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEAN

FACIFIC AND INDIAN OCLAN	
1. Palau, Micronesia	96.3
2. French Polynesia	95.2
3. Papua New Guinea	92.6
4. Maui, Hawaii	88.5
(tie) Manado, Indonesia	88.5

MODELL AMEDICA

NORTH AMERICA	
1. British Columbia	88.9
2. Islamorada and Tavernier, Fla. Keys	84.1
3. Washington state	81.0
4. Flower Garden Banks, Gulf of Mexico	80.7
5. Marathon, Fla. Keys	79.3

THE WORLD'S FAVORITES

Caribbean/Atlantic

- 1. Palancar Reef, Cozumel
- 2. Santa Rosa, Cozumel
- 3. Columbia Reef, Cozumel
- 4. Bloody Bay Wall and Jackson Point, Little Cayman
- 5. Punta Sur, Cozumel
- 6. Mary's Place, Roatan, Bay Islands, Honduras
- 7. Cedral Wall and Paso del Cedral, Cozumel
- 8. Stingray City, Grand Cayman
- 9. Hilma Hooker, Bonaire
- 10. MV Capt. Keith Tibbetts, Cayman Brac

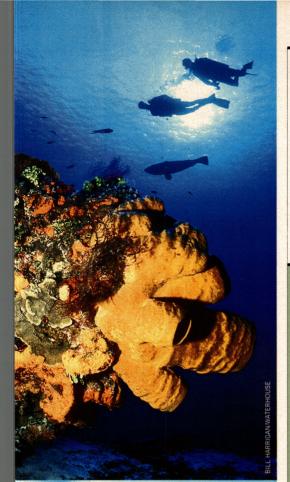
Pacific and Indian Ocean

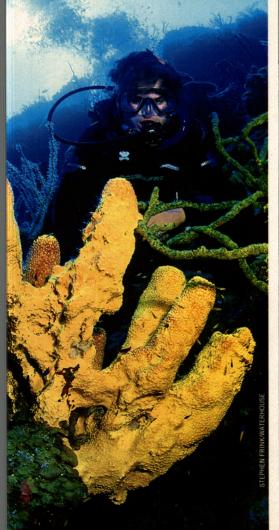
- 1. Molokini Crater, Maui, Hawaii
- 2. Mi'il and Gofnuw channels, Yap, Micronesia
- 3. Blue Corner, Palau, Micronesia
- 4. Cod Hole, Great Barrier Reef, Australia
- 5. Manta Ray Night Dive, Big Island, Hawaii
- 6. Cathedrals, Lanai, Hawaii
- 7. Garden Eel Cove, Big Island, Hawaii
- 8. Thistlegorm, Egyptian Red Sea
- 9. Sheraton Caverns, Kauai, Hawaii
- 10. SS Yongala, Great Barrier Reef, Australia

North America

- 1. Molasses Reef, Upper Fla. Keys
- 2. USCGC Duane, Upper Fla. Keys
- 3. Eagle, Upper Fla. Keys
- 4. Stetson Bank, Gulf of Mexico
- 5. Benwood, Upper Fla. Keys
- 6. U-352, North Carolina
- 7. French Reef, Upper Fla. Keys
- 8. Davis Reef, Upper Fla. Keys
- 9. North Dry Rocks, Upper Fla. Keys
- 10. Joe's Tug, Lower Fla. Keys









Best Visibility

CARIBBEAN/ATLANTIC		3. French Polynesia	90.5
1. Cozumel, Mexico	90.6	4. Solomon Islands	86.7
2. Grand Cayman	86.4	5. Big Island, Hawaii	86.3
3. Cayman Brac and Little Cayman	86.0		
4. San Salvador, Bahamas	83.9	NORTH AMERICA	
5. Bonaire	81.0	1. Flower Garden Banks, Gulf of Mexico 83.1	
		2. Florida Springs	63.2
PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEAN		3. Channel Islands, Calif.	60.9
1. Maui, Hawaii	93.8	4. Key Largo, Fla. Keys	57.1
2. Palau, Micronesia	90.7	(tie) British Columbia	57.1

What do you get when you combine the best visibility and the best

In addition to being named top destination in the Caribbean region, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman (bottom left) also topped the list of Caribbean destinations for fish life and healthy marine environment.

Healthiest Marine Environment

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CARIBBEAN/ATLANTIC			
1. Cayman Brac and Little Cayman	92.4	3. Big Island, Hawaii	92.3
2. Belize atolls	88.6	(tie) Manado, Indonesia	92.3
3. Grand Turk and Salt Cay,		5. Maui, Hawaii	91.2
Turks & Caicos	86.2		
4. Cozumel, Mexico	85.1	NORTH AMERICA	
5. British Virgin Islands	84.8	1. British Columbia	96.4
		2. Flower Garden Banks, Gulf of Mexico	95.1
PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEAN		3. Washington state	90.5
1. Papua New Guinea	96.3	4. Channel Islands, Calif.	84.8
2. Galapagos Islands	95.7	5. North Carolina	73.7

Best Places to Dive with Big Animals

CARIBBEAN/ATLANTIC			
1. Walker's Cay, Bahamas	88.2	2. Yap, Micronesia	96.2
2. Grand Bahama, Bahamas	81.0	3. French Polynesia	95.2
3. New Providence, Bahamas	73.9	4. Palau, Micronesia	94.4
4. Bimini, Bahamas	68.8	5. Sipadan, Malaysia	93.8
5. Ambergris Caye, Belize	59.7		
		NORTH AMERICA	
PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEAN		1. North Carolina	78.9
1. Galapagos Islands	100	2. Flower Garden Banks, Gulf of Mexico	57.8



Best Wreck Diving

1. Bermuda	95.7
2. Aruba	89.8
3. British Virgin Islands	76.5
4. New Providence, Bahamas	62.1
5. Cayman Brac and Little Cayman	56.5

PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEAN

1. Truk, Micronesia	100
2. Bali, Indonesia	85.7
3. Oahu, Hawaii	84.5
4. Egyptian Red Sea	75.5
5. Great Barrier Reef and Coral Sea,	
Australia	71.4

NURTH AMERICA	
1. North Carolina	94.8
2. Tavernier and Islamorada, Fla. Keys	82.4
3. Panama City, Fla.	77.8
4. British Columbia	75.0
5. Marathon, Fla. Keys	71.4

Best Wall Diving

1 Cayman Bras and Little Cayman

CARIBBEAN/ATLANTIC

1. Cayman Blac and Little Cayman	30.4
2. Grand Cayman	92.7
3. Grand Turk and Salt Cay,	
Turks & Caicos	92.3
4. Providenciales, Turks & Caicos	90.5
5. San Salvador, Bahamas	90.3

PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEAN	
1. Manado, Indonesia	95.8
2. Sipadan, Malaysia	93.8
3. Palau, Micronesia	90.7
4. Egyptian Red Sea	90.0
5. Yap, Micronesia	80.0

NORTH AMERICA

1. British Columbia	85.2
2. Washington state	77.8

Best Snorkeling

CARIBBEAN/ATLANTIC

1. British Virgin Islands	88.5
2. Cancun, Mexico	84.2
3. Ambergris Caye, Belize	78.2
4. U.S. Virgin Islands	75.0
5. Bonaire	74.3

PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEAN

1. Maui, Hawaii	91.6
2. French Polynesia	88.9
3. Big Island, Hawaii	83.3
4. Great Barrier Reef, Australia	82.2
5. Oahu, Hawaii	78.3

NORTH AMERICA

1. Key Largo, Fla. Keys	74.0
2. Florida Springs	71.4
3. Marathon, Fla. Keys	70.0
4. Tavernier and Islamorada, Fla. Keys	66.7
5. Key West, Fla. Keys	55.2

Best Beginner Diving

CARIBBEAN/ATLANTIC

1. Bonaire	93.3
2. Utila, Bay Islands, Honduras	90.5
3. U.S. Virgin Islands	89.5
4. Bermuda	88.1
5. British Virgin Islands	85.3

PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEAN

THOR TO MED INDIMIT OUT AT	
1. Maui, Hawaii	86.9
2. French Polynesia	85.0
3. Big Island, Hawaii	83.8
4. Kauai, Hawaii	83.7
5. Thailand	82.4

NORTH AMERICA	
1. Key Largo, Fla. Keys	88.5
2. Islamorada and Tavernier, Fla. Keys	87.5
3. Marathon, Fla. Keys	85.2
4. Key West, Fla. Keys	76.6
5. Florida Springs	72.2

MOST POPULAR

The destinations, operators, resorts and liveaboard providers that generated the highest number of responses.

Most Popular Dive Destinations

- 1. Cozumel, Mexico
- 2. Grand Cayman
- 3. Bonaire
- 4. Roatan, Bay Islands, Honduras
- 5. Cayman Brac and Little Cayman
- 6. Key Largo, Fla. Keys
- 7. Big Island, Hawaii
- 8. Grand Turk and Salt Cay, Turks & Caicos
- 9. Maui, Hawaii
- 10. U.S. Virgin Islands

Most Popular Operators

- 1. Dive Paradise, Cozumel, Mexico
- 2. Cecil Ingham's Sea Eye Diving of Grand Turk, Grand Turk, Turks & Caicos
- 3. Treasure Island Divers, Grand Cayman
- 4. Capt. Don's Habitat, Bonaire
- (tie) St. Croix Ultimate Bluewater Adventures,
- St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands
- 6. Bob Soto's Diving, Grand Cayman
- 7. Sand Dollar Dive & Photo, Bonaire
- 8. Anthony's Key Resort, Roatan, Bay Islands, Honduras
- 9. Scuba Club Cozumel, Cozumel, Mexico
- (tie) Ocean Frontiers, Grand Cayman

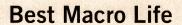
Most Popular Live-aboards

- 1. Nekton Diving Cruises, Bahamas and Belize atolls
- 2. MV Spree. Gulf of Mexico
- 3. Blackbeard's Cruises, Bahamas
- 4. Peter Hughes/Wave Dancer, Belize atolls
- 5. Peter Hughes/Sea Dancer, Turks & Caicos
- 6. Cayman Aggressor IV, Cayman Islands
- (tie) Peter Hughes/Wind Dancer, Turks & Caicos
- 8. Peter Hughes/Sun Dancer II, Palau, Micronesia
- (tie) Bay Islands Aggressor IV, Honduras (tie) MV Fling, Gulf of Mexico

Most Popular Resorts

- 1. Plaza Las Glorias, Cozumel, Mexico
- 2. Allegro Resort, Cozumel, Mexico
- (tie) Fiesta Americana, Cozumel, Mexico
- 4. Capt. Don's Habitat, Bonaire
- 5. Scuba Club Cozumel, Cozumel, Mexico
- 6. Anthony's Key Resort, Roatan, Bay Islands, Honduras
- 7. Manta Ray Bay Hotel, Yap, Micronesia
- (tie) Little Cayman Beach Resort, Little Cayman
- (tie) Treasure Island Resort, Grand Cayman
- 10. Sand Dollar Condominium Resort, Bonaire
- (tie) Divi Tiara Beach Resort, Cayman Brac
- (tie) Buddy Dive Resort, Bonaire





CARIBBEAN/ATLANTIC

1. Utila, Bay Islands, Honduras	93.3
2. British Virgin Islands	89.3
3. Bonaire	88.1
4. Grand Turk and Salt Cay,	
Turks & Caicos	82.1
5. Cayman Brac and Little Cayman	81.7

PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEAN

1. Solomon Islands	100
2. Manado, Indonesia	96.2
3. Papua New Guinea	96.0
4. Fiji	91.5
5. Truk, Micronesia	88.2

NORTH AMERICA

1. British Columbia	92.0
2. Flower Garden Banks, Gulf of Mexico	65.9
3. Channel Islands, Calif.	64.3
4. Washington state	60.0
5. Key West, Fla. Keys	57.8
c,,,,,	

Best Shore Diving

CARIBBEAN/ATLANTIC

1. Bonaire	93.6
2. Curação	81.0
3. U.S. Virgin Islands	74.1
4. Grand Cayman	64.3
5. Roatan, Bay Islands, Honduras	57.1

PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEAN

1. Maui, Hawaii	90.5
2. Sipadan, Malaysia	87.5
3. Kauai, Hawaii	75.0
4. Bali, Indonesia	73.3
5. Big Island, Hawaii	72.9





Best Advanced Diving

CARIBBEAN/ATLANTIC

1. Cayman Brac and Little Cayman	94.6	(tie) Cocos Island, Costa Rica	100
2. Cozumel, Mexico	92.6	(tie) Sipadan, Malaysia	100
3. Utila, Bay Islands, Honduras	90.5	5. Yap, Micronesia	98.0
4. San Salvador, Bahamas	90.3		
5. Grand Turk and Salt Cay,		NORTH AMERICA	
Turks & Caicos	88.1	1. British Columbia	96.4
		2. Washington state	90.5
PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEAN		3. North Carolina	89.7
1. Truk, Micronesia	100	4. Flower Garden Banks, Gulf of Mexico	87.8
(tie) Galapagos Islands	100	5. Channel Islands, Calif.	80.4

Best Dive Operators

CARIBBEAN/ATLANTIC

1. Cayman Diving Lodge, Grand Cayman	96.4
2. Reef Divers, Little Cayman	95.2
3. Ocean Frontiers, Grand Cayman	95.0
(tie) Reef Divers, Cayman Brac	95.0
5. Toucan Diving, Bonaire	94.7
6. CoCo View Resort, Roatan, Bay Islands, Honduras	94.5
7. Riding Rock Inn, San Salvador, Bahamas	92.9
8. Scuba Club Cozumel, Cozumel, Mexico	92.7
9. St. Croix Ultimate Bluewater Adventures (SCUBA), St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands	92.1
10. Cecil Ingham's Sea Eye Diving of Grand Turk, Grand Turk, Turks & Caicos	91.8

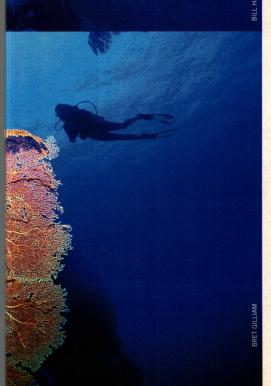
PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEAN

1. Sam's Dive Tours, Palau, Micronesia	97.6
2. Eco-Adventures, Big Island, Hawaii	95.2
3. Jack's Diving Locker, Big Island, Hawaii	91.1
4. Yap Divers, Yap, Micronesia	90.6
5. Sea Sport Divers, Kauai, Hawaii	88.5
6. Lahaina Divers, Maui, Hawaii	88.0
7. Mike Severns Diving, Maui, Hawaii	86.7
8. Aqua-Trek Taveuni, Fiji	84.9
9. Reef Trekkers Hawaii, Oahu, Hawaii	84.6
10. Maui Dive Shop, Maui, Hawaii	78.1

NORTH AMERICA	
1. Olympus Dive Center, Morehead City, N.C.	96.6
2. Lady Cyana Divers, Islamorada, Fla. Keys	91.7
3. Island Dive & Water Sports, Orcas Island (San Juan Islands), Wash.	89.5
4. Coral Island Charters, Inc., West Palm Beach, Fla.	87.7
5. Discovery Diving Company, Beaufort, N.C.	86.2
6. Amy Slate's Amoray Dive, Key Largo, Fla. Keys	85.6
7. Conch Republic Divers, Tavernier, Fla. Keys	85.4
8. Key West Diving Society, Key West, Fla. Keys	84.4
9. Aqua-Nut Divers, Key Largo, Fla. Keys	79.4
10. Ocean Divers Inc., Key Largo, Fla. Keys	73.1









Best Live-Aboards

CARIBBEAN/ATLANTIC	
1. Belize Aggressor III, Belize atolls	96.1
2. Peter Hughes/Wave Dancer, Belize atolls	93.9
3. Turks & Caicos Aggressor, Turks & Caicos	93.1
4. Peter Hughes/Sea Dancer, Turks & Caicos	90.5
5. MV Caribbean Explorer, Eastern Caribbean	88.8
6. Peter Hughes/Wind Dancer, Turks & Caicos	88.5
7. Cayman Aggressor IV, Cayman Islands	88.0
8. Sea Fever Diving Cruises, Bahamas	86.5
9. Nekton Diving Cruises, Bahamas and Belize atolls	85.5
10. Peter Hughes/Antares Dancer, Venezuela	73.9
PACIFIC AND INDIAN OCEAN	
1. Odyssey, Truk, Micronesia	98.4
2. Galapagos Aggressors I and II, Galapagos Islands	95.8
3. Peter Hughes/Star Dancer, Palau, Micronesia and Papua New Guinea	93.8
4. Peter Hughes/Sun Dancer II, Palau, Micronesia	92.4
5. Mike Ball Dive Expeditions / Spoilsport, Coral Sea, Australia	90.0
6. Mike Ball Dive Expeditions / Paradise Sport, Papua New Guinea	89.7
7. Palau Aggressor II, Palau, Micronesia	87.5
8. Fiji Aggressor, Fiji	86.7
9. Solmar V, Baja, Mexico	67.0
10. Mike Ball Dive Expeditions / Supersport, Great Barrier Reef, Australia	66.9
NORTH AMERICA	
1. MV Spree, Gulf of Mexico	87.3
2. Truth Aquatics/Vision, Channel Islands, Calif.	84.1

Best Dive Resorts

3. MV Fling, Gulf of Mexico

	1. Presidente Inter-Continental, Cozumel, Mexico	92.2
	2. Garden Island Resort, Taveuni, Fiji	92.1
1	3. Palau Pacific Resort, Palau, Micronesia	89.5
100	4. Brac Reef Beach Resort, Cayman Brac	89.1
	5. Little Cayman Beach Resort, Little Cayman	88.3
	6. Harbour Village Beach Resort, Bonaire	85.7
1	7. Allegro Resort, Cozumel, Mexico	85.4
	8. Iberostar, Cozumel, Mexico	84.3
	9. Manta Ray Bay Hotel, Yap, Micronesia	82.8
	10. Plaza Resort Bonaire, Bonaire	82.3
1000	11. Scuba Club Cozumel, Cozumel, Mexico	79.7
	12. Costa Club/Fiesta Inn, Cozumel, Mexico	79.5
	13. Reef Club Isla Cozumel, Cozumel, Mexico	78.2
1	14. Fiesta Americana, Cozumel, Mexico	75.7
A STATE OF STREET	15. Turks Head Inn, Grand Turk, Turks & Caicos	75.2
1		

69.0

DIVE SAFETY GUIDE

Have you grown complacent when it comes to dive safety? Here are eight examples of how little mistakes can add up to big trouble.

Fact

Dive accidents are rarely the result of one big mistake. More often than not, it's a series of small, easyto-miss errors that create a problem.

Chalk it up to complacency. When you become relaxed and comfortable about diving, it's easy to let down your guard. That's one reason why Divers Alert Network statistics (see "Dive Safety by the Numbers," pg. 79) show as many dive accidents among old salts as newbies.

None of the divers in these composite scenarios was obviously foolish or grossly careless. They just cut corners. They remembered the big rules, but forgot some of the little ones.

DCS: What? Me Worry?

George, 38, has been certified for 16 years and still dives nearly every week. Constantly in search of more bottom time, he begins pushing the no-deco limits, cutting planned deco stops short, making faster ascents and skipping safety stops. He justifies this with the belief that dive tables are designed for average divers and include a generous margin of safety. Because he is a relaxed, skillful diver with an unusually high level of physical fitness, George believes he is especially resistant to DCS. He points out that he has never been "bent."

Today's first dive is actually conservative for George, a

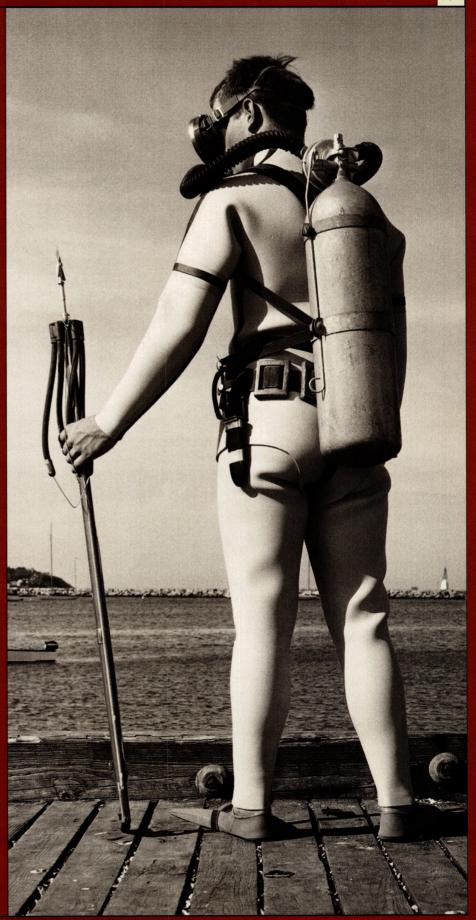
wall dive to no feet within no-deco limits. The dive goes smoothly, and with many colored sponges to look at on the way up, George makes a fairly slow ascent. As usual, however, his "safety stop" at about 15 feet is no more than a brief pause. Thirty minutes after reboarding the boat, George suffers a massive central nervous system DCS hit. Fortunately, air evacuation to a recompression chamber is rapid, and George makes a full recovery.

WHAT GEORGE FORGOT

Recreational dive tables and computer algorithms are estimates of DCS probabilities, not guarantees, and not all the causes of DCS are known. Because of that uncertainty, a safety margin is needed, which George was

10 Safe Diving Tips

- 1. Maintain your gear. Check it before the dive trip, and before the dive.
- 2. Be physically and mentally fit. Strength, endurance and aerobic conditioning are all essential to safe diving and all decline inevitably unless you maintain them with exercise and good diet. Mental fitness includes control of stress and anxiety, and developing confidence in your skills. Begin your dive rested, warm and hydrated.
- 3. Dive within your training and experience. Unusual depth, cold water, high currents, low visibility and restricted overheads all present unique challenges. Yes, you'll learn by doing, but get special training first.
- 4. Plan your dive, dive your plan. Visualize potential problems and map out responses. Agree with your buddy on comfortable limits of time, depth, swimming direction and hand signals.
- 5. Watch your gauges, keep a margin of safety. Even if you know your air consumption rate, unusual combinations of depth, current and exertion can surprise you. Use the green/yellow/red zones on your computer as approximate indications, not absolute. Use less of the green on repetitive dives.
- 6. Breathe continuously, deeply and slowly. Fatigue and panic can elevate your breathing rate to levels your regulator can't support. When either appears, it's vital to stop, calm down, breathe slowly and, if necessary, get to the surface.
- 7. When in doubt, cancel the dive. The best way to prevent minor problems from snowballing into life-threatening emergencies is to abort the dive immediately. Likewise, if you feel in your gut that today's dive is beyond your capabilities, have the courage to opt out.
- 8. Ascend slowly, stop near 15 feet. A slow ascent rate (about 30 feet per minute) and a safety stop for at least three minutes at about 15 feet are the best ways to cut DCS risks.
- 9. Accept responsibility for your own safety. Your role in the buddy team is to be able to help your buddy, not to rely on your buddy to help you. In fact, if you don't think you could make a dive alone, you shouldn't make it with a buddy.
- 10. Have fun! Remember, that's the point of all this. If you're cold, tired or something just doesn't feel right, don't do it. Concentrate on what you like about diving, and cultivate the joy. Your enthusiasm will make you more confident and safer.





using up with his fast ascents and short stops. Finally, the odds caught up with him. Perhaps George was dehydrated this morning. Or tired. Or cold. Certainly, he is getting older. All these factors are known to increase the risk of DCS. Or perhaps some other factor not yet understood made today George's unlucky day.

WHAT YOU SHOULD REMEMBER

- ⇒ No one is immune from DCS.
- ⇒ Keep a margin of safety between you and your predicted no-deco limit. Increase the margin on repetitive dives, and as you get older.
- ⇒Always make a slow ascent and a three- to five-minute safety stop. Consider this your personal margin of safety.

Out of Practice, Out of Shape

Ralph, 42, certified for 12 years, used to dive from the beach almost every weekend, but job and family have severely reduced his bottom time in the last five years. When his old dive buddies propose getting together for another beach dive, he agrees enthusiastically.

Ralph finds that carrying his gear to the beach and suiting up is more work than he remembers. His wetsuit seems to fit more tightly can it have shrunk? By the time Ralph enters the water, he is red-faced and puffing. The waves seem bigger than he remembers, too. One staggers him, and he recovers his balance with difficulty. He fails to duck completely under the next wave, and is tumbled up onto the beach,

er diver on the boat who is a stranger to Jason. Early in the dive, Jason and Art become separated. But the dive is shallow, the water clear and calm, and Jason assumes that Art has merely gone his own way. He continues the dive in the solo mode he is accustomed to.

After 40 minutes, Jason returns to the dive boat, only to meet hot stares and cold shoulders. He discovers that Art, on losing contact with Jason and not finding him after a brief search, has aborted his dive and returned to the boat to report that Jason is missing. Divernasters have been searching for Jason with increasing anxiety, which now turns into anger.

WHAT JASON FORGOT

Both Jason and Art failed to plan their dive. Especially, they failed to make clear what each diver would do if they became separated. Art followed standard procedure, which requires a diver to treat separation as a possible emergency: To surface and report if he loses his buddy and cannot find him again. Jason did not. If a buddy team is to become a pair of solo divers, both divers must agree to it before the dive begins.

WHAT YOU SHOULD REMEMBER

- ⇒ Planning your dive includes coming to agreement on what you will do in case of separation. When diving with a buddy, planning means explicit communication.
- ⇒ A buddy relationship entails duties to the other diver, even though the relationship is forced on you. You can decline those duties only before the dive begins.

THE SAFETY ROUTINE HOW TO GUARD AGAINST GETTING TOO RELAXED AND FORGETTING SAFETY.

TRY A CHECKLIST. Pilots go through detailed checklists before every take-off for a good reason: If it's written down, and must be checked off, you're not likely to forget it. Planning a dive against a checklist ensures that, for example, you and a new buddy remember to agree on hand signals.

exhausted. Wisely, he decides to sit out the dive.

WHAT RALPH FORGOT

Physical fitness is an essential element of your readiness to dive, and it declines with both age and inactivity. Ralph's more sedentary lifestyle made him less able to cope with the physical demands of diving. Enthusiasm for this reunion dive, and perhaps peer pressure, led him to attempt too much.

WHAT YOU SHOULD REMEMBER

- ⇒ Exercise regularly to improve, or at least maintain, your ability to meet unusual physical demands like waves and currents.
- ⇒ Choose your diving to suit your physical abilities. Recognize that some types of diving require more strength and stamina than others.
- ⇒ If you become exhausted, stop, rest and—if necessary—bail out of the dive.

Your Buddy: Friend or Foe?

Jason, 32, has been an active diver for eight years. He normally dives solo and believes strongly in each diver's need to be responsible for his own safety. He maintains his equipment carefully and carries appropriate safety equipment, including a pony bottle.

On an out-of-state trip, he books a dive with a local boat. The divemaster insists that Jason dive with a buddy, and pairs him with Art, anoth-

Bad Gear Equals a Bad Dive

Melinda, 42, has not been diving in the year previous to this trip to Cozumel. In the rush to clear her desk before her vacation, she failed to have her regulator serviced, but it is a high-performance one that has always worked flawlessly.

Upon reaching a depth of 60 feet on her first dive, Melinda's second stage begins to free-flow violently. Banging it with her hand and pushing the purge several times fail to stop the free-flow. Melinda aborts her dive, and misses the day's second dive as well while her regulator is being repaired.

WHAT MELINDA FORGOT

Regulator performance degrades with time, even if the regulator is not used or is rarely used. As important as it may have been to Melinda to finish her work before her dive vacation to Cozumel, her life may depend on whether she has also taken time to inspect and service her dive equipment.

WHAT YOU SHOULD REMEMBER

- ⇒ Regulators should be serviced at least once a year; more often if used frequently or in harsh conditions.
- ⇒ Packing for a dive trip should include detailed inspection of all your dive gear, so cracked straps and corroded fittings can be fixed before they cause trouble.



Doing Too Much

Randall, 28, has been diving for seven years. He has become interested in underwater photography, and on this trip to the Cayman Islands will be trying out a new camera system, complete with strobe and macro lens. Just before leaving, a buddy offers to let him borrow his new backinflation BC, a style Randall is eager to try out, so he agrees.

On his first dive, at 90 feet along a wall, Randall is intent on adjusting his strobe arm and camera settings and doesn't notice that he is slightly buoyant and beginning to ascend. By the time he realizes it, he is passing through 70 feet and gaining speed. He quickly reaches for the BC's oral inflator but, momentarily confused by the unfamiliar controls, pushes the wrong button and adds air instead of dumping it. With his ascent out of control, he pops to the surface. But Randall is nevertheless very lucky: he escapes injury and even maintains his grip on his camera.

WHAT RANDALL FORGOT

By diving with several pieces of major equipment that were unfamiliar to him, Randall risked task overloading. The unusual concentration required to master his new camera system left him paying too little attention to how his BC worked, much less to his environment and his buoyancy. His depth may have contributed to the problem if some nitrogen narcosis was present—always a possibility below 60 feet. It certainly increased the risk.

Dive Safety by the Numbers

QUESTION Which group suffers the most dive accidents: The nervous newbies or complacent old salts?

ANSWER It's a tie. According to the latest available stats*:

Depending on gender, divers with basic scuba training account for 35 to almost 50 percent of accidents, while advanced certified divers account for about 40 percent.

So what do these numbers mean? Maybe a lot, maybe very little. As DAN points out, "time since initial training is not necessarily a good measure of diving experience or current ability." And the stats may be influenced by other factors: Experienced divers tend to be older and more susceptible to cardiovascular disease, for example, or they may be attempting more difficult dives.

BOTTOM LINE Complacency about the risks of diving, at any skill or experience level, may be the biggest risk of all.

* Source: Report on Decompression Illness and Diving Fatalities: 2000 Edition, Divers Alert Network. Covers 1998 accidents. The 2001 edition, covering 1999 injuries, should be available by the time this issue is out. Copies available from DAN by calling (919) 684-2948 or at www.diversalertnetwork.org.

THE SAFETY ROUTINE HOW TO GUARD AGAINST GETTING TOO RELAXED AND FORGETTING SAFETY.

DEVELOP A ROUTINE. Always doing things the same way, in the same order, helps prevent dumb mistakes. Always packing your gear in the same order, and always dressing in the same order, for example, makes it less likely that you'll forget something.

WHAT YOU SHOULD REMEMBER

- ⇒ Introduce only one piece of major new equipment at a time. Perhaps take a dive or two to familiarize yourself with a new BC before starting to use a new camera. Or decline your friend's offer of the BC.
- ⇒ If you haven't been diving for a while, it may be best to take nothing new on the first dive. Use this one to fine-tune your buoyancy and reacquaint yourself with your equipment.
- ⇒ Struggling with new equipment causes stress. So do cold, depth, current and low visibility. When environmental factors will make the dive difficult anyway, don't compound your problems with unfamiliar
- ⇒ A rapid or out-of-control ascent increases the risk of embolism. Forget your camera, flare your arms and legs and keep your airway open.

Though Patrick has never made a wreck dive or been trained in wreck penetration, he feels obligated to accompany Bill on the dive. "Bill seems to know what we're doing," he says to himself. "I'll follow him."

The wreck has been partially opened up for easier diving, but when Patrick follows Bill inside, he is surprised at how cramped and dark it is. He has trouble adjusting his buoyancy and overcompensates, frequently bumping against the sides and the ceiling of the compartments. Just as Bill's fin tips disappear into the next compartment, Patrick's fins stir up a cloud of silt. Unexpectedly blinded, Patrick becomes disoriented. Now approaching panic, he gropes wildly for an exit but has no idea where it is.

Fortunately, Bill realizes they have become separated, and returns to the previous compartment. He hears Patrick's rapid breathing and scraping of the walls. Reaching into the cloud of silt, he feels Patrick's shoulder and is able to pull him through the opening to a larger compartment that is lighter and open to the outside. Patrick begins to calm down, but both decide to end the dive and surface.

Blind Faith

Patrick, 33, has been diving for seven years, mostly for game and scallops in California's kelp beds. He makes his first dive trip to the Caribbean when Bill invites him to take the place of another diver who became sick at the last minute. For Bill, one of the highlights of the trip will be a dive on a famous wreck. In fact, Bill and his original buddy had taken a wreck diving course to prepare themselves.

WHAT PATRICK FORGOT

Patrick made several mistakes, the most serious of which was to be a dependent buddy, to abandon responsibility for his own safety and assume Bill would be able to take care of him. Rather than disappoint Bill or look like a "chicken," he made a dive he was not prepared for.

(continued on pg. 129)



Midwesterners who wear only their Speedos, to cold-prone divers who wear 5- to 6-mil wetsuits. A full 3mm wetsuit works for most divers in most situations.

CLIMATE Sunny and warm with frequent and brief rain showers. There is very little annual variation in climate—the average high is 85F; the average low 70F. A light sweater or jacket may come in handy in winter.

PLANNING YOUR TRIP Fortunately, there is no bad time of year to dive Hawaii. Swells coming down from Alaska in winter make diving northern sites next to impossible, so plan on diving more southerly sites. If you visit the islands between November and March, take binoculars and zoom lenses on the dive boat, from where you'll have the greatest chance of seeing humpback whales.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS Need we remind you that Hawaii is a state? So, if you're coming from anywhere in the U.S., no documents are needed. Canadians need some form of identification; all other foreign visitors need a passport, and a visa if necessary.

GETTING THERE AND AROUND Most major domestic and several international carriers fly into Honolulu, Kailua-Kona and Maui. Inter-island airlines include Hawaiian and Aloha, and all seating on these flights are open, which means you stand in line, board the plane and grab the first seat available. These flights are short, with the longest taking about 45 minutes.



By the readers and editors of RSD

inding yourself in a large, bustling American city while simultaneously being in one of the remotest spots on the planet is a strange paradox. For starters, you might think you'd need a passport to get there, but you don't. You'd think your cell phone wouldn't work there. It does. You'd expect to struggle linguistically with the locals. You won't. You'd expect all kinds of things-to jump through hoops to get there, to schlepp your gear through dirt streets, to be agonizingly disoriented, to come back with horrific stories of struggling for your very survival. But that's Hawaii - it defies expectations. And best of all, you get all the amenities and conveniences of modern civilization, without ever leaving the United States.

When you're in Hawaii, you're at nearly the exact center of the enormous Pacific Basin, which takes up an amazing one-third of the earth's surface. You're more than a couple thousand miles from the nearest landmass. In fact, there are some parts of the United States that are actually closer to Europe than they are to you, and you're nearer to Japan and Australia than you are to the nation's capital. No wonder it's become a sort of crossroads of the Pacific. Where else can you surf, mountain bike, snow ski, scuba dive, lie on a beach and go mall-shopping all in one place, in one vacation?

Survey says ...

Reader comments are provided only for those dive operators that received a minimum number of surveys in our Top 100 Readers' Choice Survey.

The Big Island

THE BIG ISLAND of Hawaii rises from ocean depths to the cloud-choked peaks of Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea. The island has three distinct climate zones: a dry, almost-always-sunny Kona Coast, the lee of the island; a much wetter windward side, around Hilo, where you can expect at least a brief downpour every day; and a snow-capped alpine region punctuated by the island's 13,000-foot-plus peaks. It's the baby of the very young Hawaiian island family, only about one million years old, and continues to grow, thanks to its bubbling volcanoes.

THE DIVING

Most diving takes place on the western shore along the Kona Coast, and most dive operators are based in the town of Kailua-Kona. The island is probably best known for nighttime encounters with mantas, and with the exception of Yap and maybe the Socorro Islands, perhaps nowhere else on earth can you see the animals so consistently. So put fresh batteries in your flashlights and charge up those strobes—this is a big animal encounter at its hest

You'll find evidence of the Big Island's volcanic origins at its dive sites, and the underwater relief consists of gently sloping reefs accented by swim-throughs, archways and spongeencrusted lava tubes, filled with ambient light, some measuring up to 90 feet in length. There are more than 70 permanent mooring buoys along the Kona Coast, with another 25 planned. Most dive sites are a 20- to 40-minute boat ride from the marina in Kailua-Kona. The island has no major wreck dives to speak of, but two are planned—one for the Kohala Coast in the north, and one in front of the Royal Kona Resort in Kailua-Kona. Both are large former Navy vessels from Oahu, and should be sunk within the next couple of years.

Consistent encounters with big animals, good visibility and relatively warm water ... No wonder Kona's famed manta ray night dive was rated among the top 5 dive sites in the Pacific region by our readers.



WHAT OUR READERS SAY: BIG ISLAND DIVE OPERATORS

Divers give this operation high scores for a staff that "handles all the gear" and gives "excellent dive briefings." Eco-Adventures can provide nitrox fills and has rebreathers.

Jack's Diving Locker

Jack's Diving Locker receives high marks all-around, from the "personable and knowledgeable staff" to the "beautiful dive shop and nice, uncrowded boats." This operation draws "many repeat customers."

Several readers remarked on the "personal touch" that this operation adds to its dives, "Uncrowded boats" and "reasonable rates for multi-dive packages" are two more reasons readers cite for diving with this operation.

Divers commend this operation for its "beautiful location and excellent service." The people here are noted for being "the friendliest staff ever," but some divers found the "slow boat" was "not good for those prone to motion sickness."

THREE GREAT BIG ISLAND DIVES

Manta Ray Night Dive

DEPTH 30 to 40 feet

SKILL LEVEL Intermediate Normally, this dive takes place off the Kona Surf Hotel. When the resort was built, large spotlights illuminated the seashore so guests could enjoy watching the pounding waves. But it was soon discovered that the brightly lit waters attracted swarms of plankton, and in turn, mantas. Dive operators usually lower powerful lights to the bottom at about 30 feet, and divers gather around them like Boy Scouts at a campfire. With divers pointing their flashlights up from the bottom and snorkelers shining theirs from the surface, the whole scene looks like an underwater disco. The normally shy mantas lose all inhibitions and perform barrel rolls and loop-deloops in the nutrient-rich waters. If you're lucky, the graceful creatures will stay with you for a halfhour or more. This is truly one of the world's most electrifying night dives.

Turtle Pinnacle

DEPTH 25 to 60 feet SKILL LEVEL Novice to inter-

Turtles are pretty much everywhere in Big Island waters, but this dive site just outside Honokohau Harbor offers perhaps the best opportunity to see them being cleaned by surgeonfish. The turtles aren't shy here, and often allow fairly close approaches, so don't forget the camera. You'll also see thick schools of Achilles tang, milletseed butterflyfish and the occasional octopus and peacock flounder.

Garden Eel Cove

DEPTH 15 feet to beyond SKILL LEVEL Advanced As soon as you flip out of the boat, you should spot a resident school of Heller's barracudaendemic to Hawaii-and nomadic aggregations of milletseed butterflyfish and Achilles tang. Starting at the top of the reef, a sandy chute pours out over the gently sloping reef. Follow it down to about 100 feet. where you'll see a crop of garden eels swaying in the current as if mesmerized by a snake charmer's flute. Occasionally, this is also the site for the island's famous manta ray night dive. depending on where the creatures feel like hanging out.

IT'S A SHAME that the most that many visitors to Hawaii will ever see of the state is Waikiki Beach, their hotel room, and the restaurants and souvenir shops in between. Honolulu is a major Pacific tourism destination, and the state's socio-economic and transportation hub. But make no mistake, the city is no quiet, peaceful South Seas paradise—it's a serious urban center, with all the advantages and drawbacks of any major U.S. city.

But it's also possible to escape to the tunedout North Shore, home to some of the world's best surfing. You'll also find good diving in the north, but you'll have to wait until summer when the north swells die down. And just minutes from downtown Honolulu is Hanauma Bay, Oahu's most popular snorkeling site. Don't be put off by its popularity. Beginning divers can explore the inner reef, while intermediate and advanced divers venture to the outer reef and the points. The entire bay is a reserve, so the fish are plentiful and friendly.

THE DIVING

Most Oahu dive operators are clustered in and around the greater Honolulu area, with others scattered around the perimeter of the island. Most shops offer pickups from the major Waikiki hotels and resorts and transport divers to various city marinas. Dive sites are season-dependent, with most winter diving taking place in the south and west sides of the island because of strong north swells barreling down from Alaska, while summer affords the opportunity to dive the North Shore on a more regular basis. Southern sites can be dived pretty much year-round, though they become a little more iffy with small summer swells.

Don't expect the lush reefs of the Caribbean—the island is young and the same waves that produce some of the world's best surfing also have a tendency to destroy any corals that attempt to build here. You'll find the same volcanic-inspired relief here that you do on the other islands, including archways, tunnels and lava tubes.

But what Oahu doesn't have in reefs, it makes up for with wrecks. Perhaps the most popular are the YO-257, the *Mahi* and the *Corsair*, though newer wrecks are beginning to attract life and should become star attractions soon.

THREE GREAT OAHU DIVES

YO-257 and San Pedro Wrecks

DEPTH 85 ft. to main deck of YO-257, 100 ft. to bottom SKILL LEVEL Intermediate The YO-257 is perhaps the most requested dive on Oahu. There are actually two shipwrecks on this site, the 257 and the San Pedro, both sitting upright and parallel to each other about 100 feet apart just off Waikiki Beach. Both wrecks were sunk intentionally—the 180-foot oil tanker YO in 1986 and the 155-foot freighter San Pedro in 1989—by Atlantis Submarines so the sub's passengers would have something interesting to look at. Divers aren't complaining, mind you. Here you'll find green sea turtles, whitetip reef sharks, millet-seed butterflyfish, schools of filefish, triggerfish, moray eels and snappers.

Makaha Caverns

DEPTH 20 to 40 feet SKILL LEVEL Novice to intermediate

Lava caverns, volcanic ledges, overhangs and grottoes form a playground for marine life and divers. Squirrelfish, triggerfish, hawkfish and a variety of reef critters skitter about. The green turtles here welcome up-close and personal encounters with divers.

MV Mahi

DEPTH 50 to 100 feet
SKILL LEVEL Intermediate
This 165-foot-long minesweeper
sits upright in 100 feet of water
a mile off the west coast of
Oahu. Pipe cleaner nudibranchs clutch the hull, and
moray eels, reef sharks and
tropicals swarm the decks. Penetration is possible, but you
need perfect buoyancy in order
to keep from stirring up silt.

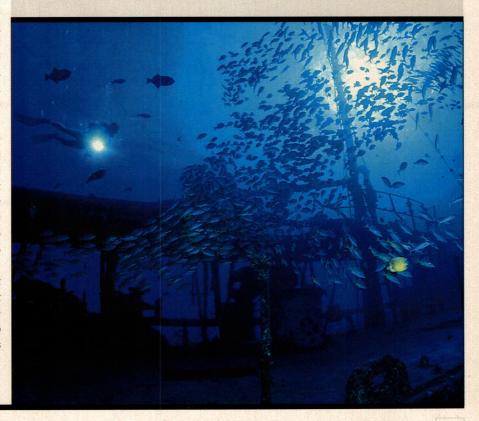
WHAT OUR READERS SAY: OAHU DIVE OPERATORS

Ocean Concepts

"Door-to-door service was prompt and friendly," readers say. The staff earns high marks for a "fun attitude" and "personal instruction above the call of duty."

Reef Trekkers

The "friendly and knowledgeable" staff at Reef Trekkers is praised by divers who appreciate "personal attention" and "small groups." They know "the island, the dive sites and the marine life, inside and out."



THREE GREAT MAUI DIVES

Molokini Crater Reserve

DEPTH 10 to 130 feet SKILL LEVEL Novice to advanced

There are more than a halfdozen sites in the protected waters around Molokini, from shallow areas inside the crater rim to deep drop-offs along the outer seaward wall. Marine life is abundant, thanks to reserve status and the Alakakeiki Channel. which circulates clear, nutrientrich water throughout the crater. At Reef's End, schools of raccoon butterflyfish and jacks swarm one of Molokini's fishiest sites, while Edge of the World is a current-swept shark center.

Whitetip sharks sleep under the ledges of the backside wall and in late summer, gray sharks come in from the blue to mate. In early winter, you may even encounter whale sharks here.

The Cathedrals (First and Second)

DEPTH 50 to 65 feet SKILL LEVEL All skill levels These are basically huge lava bubbles that nearly, but not quite, burst. They are not caves because there are no dead ends, and there are several ways in and out. Take a light with you to check out the soldierfish-packed crevices, ghost shrimp and six different species of lobster.

Red Hill

DEPTH 40 to 60 feet SKILL LEVEL Novice to intermediate

This site is adjacent to Makena Beach, one of Maui's most popular nude beaches. While dareto-bare sunbathers freckle on the sand, the bay is flushed by rich currents. Green sea turtles, seldom-seen zebra eels, frogfish and other rare fish are commonly spotted in this little oasis. Not far from Red Hill are Marty's Reef, populated with lionfish and scorpionfish, and Hawaiian Reef, where you may occasionally see humpback whales.

THIS TWO-VOLCANO island is surrounded on the west by three distinct islands that together make up the County of Maui-Molokai, Lanai and the uninhabited Kahoolawe. Although there are resorts on Lanai and Molokai—the fifth- and sixth-largest Hawaiian Islands—all diving originates in Maui, mostly from the towns of Lahaina, Kaanapali and Kihei along the west coast. Perhaps best known for killer windsurfing and its crescent-shaped Molokini Crater, the island of Maui is second only to the Big Island in size and to Oahu in bustle.

THE DIVING

This is the only area of Hawaii where charter operations travel to neighboring islands on regularly scheduled day trips. Dive boats depart Lahaina daily to cross the channel to Lanai and, when the weather cooperates, to Molokai. Charters exploring southern Maui and Molokini Crater (Maui's most popular destination) leave out of Maalaea Harbor and Kihei Boat Ramp to the south. Diving is prohibited at Kahoolawe, which has been designated a native Hawaiian reserve.

Tradewinds sweep the valley between Maui's two main peaks in the afternoon, so dive charters depart early to take advantage of flat water. Get used to rising early and spending your afternoons dry. Chances are you'll dive Maui's two most popular sites—Molokini Crater and The Cathedrals off Lanai. Both are excellent with great potential for marine life encounters.

WHAT OUR READERS SAY: MAUI DIVE OPERATORS

Mike Severns Diving

Known for its environmental and educational approach to diving, this operation earns praise for its naturalist- and marine biologist-led dives and "excellent pre-dive briefings."

Maui Dive Shop has six stores island-wide and "fast, modern boats." Divers like the staff, which "takes very good care of divers," but some say the operation is "pricey."

Lahaina Divers

This operation "pampers divers on and off the boat." Divers are impressed by the "friendliness and knowledge" of the staff, but not the "high prices."



Hawaii's waters protect humpback whales with marine sanctuary status, and are the only area in the U.S. where the big creatures reproduce.

BEEN TO HAWAII LATELY? RATE YOUR DIVE TRIP!

Fill out the Reader Ratings survey for any trip you've taken to Hawaii (or any other destination) in the past year, and you might win big prizes. Simply go to www.scubadiving.com /readersrate. Your responses will help create the Top 100 Readers' Choice Awards, and you'll be entered into our Reader Ratings Sweepstakes, for a chance to win dive trips and scuba gear.

With its volcanic reefscape and large proportion of endemic fish, Hawaii diving is unique in all the Pacific Basin.

THIS IS HAWAII in its most natural, least developed state, a far cry from the hustle of Honolulu. Topside excursions include hiking the Na Pali Coast and kayaking the many rivers flowing from the central volcanic peak of Mt. Waialeale. The oldest, smallest and least developed of the big four Hawaiian islands, Kauai is the answered prayer for advanced divers seeking virgin sites and quiet nights.

THE DIVING

Weather plays a big role in deciding where you'll dive on Kauai. Operators dive southern sites most of the year, at least until summer. That is when weather from the north lets up, and operators start taking advantage of the fresh sites that they've been avoiding. Most dive operations are independent, and boats depart from any one of the many local harbors. Your departure point will vary from season to season, so be sure you get directions to the right harbor and don't miss the boat.

WHAT OUR READERS SAY: KAUAI DIVE OPERATORS

Bubbles Below

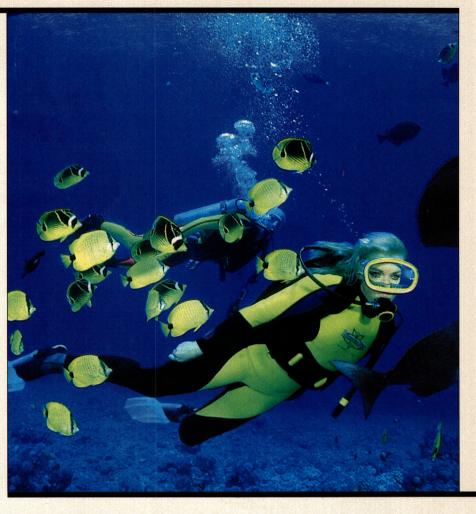
Bubbles Below dives Kauai and also makes trips to Ni'ihau. The operation earned excellent scores for value and an "extremely knowledgeable" dive staff, but lower marks for facilities and boats.

Fathom Five Divers

Fathom Five focuses on sites on the south side of Kauai. Readers compliment the operation's "skilled staff and great divernasters," but found boats and onshore facilities lacking.

Sea Sport Divers

The high-scoring staff "make divers feel safe and comfortable," although experienced divers often felt "treated as beginners." Rental gear and boats are reported to be "in great shape" and "outfitted with top-of-the-line emergency equipment."



THREE GREAT KAUAI DIVES

Brennecke's Ledge

DEPTH 50 to 80 feet SKILL LEVEL Novice to

advanced

Brennecke's Ledge is nearly a mile offshore, and too large a site for even the most ambitious fin flappers to cover in one dive. The centerpiece of the dive is a long wall that starts in 50 feet of water and drops five to 15 feet with deep undercuts that are decorated with colorful tubastrea cup coral. There's a lava tube near the dive site mooring, and several whitetip reef sharks frequent the area. This is one of the few dives where black coral is abundant, and nearly every tree is home to longnose hawkfish. Look for bicolor anthias, Hawaiian turkeyfish and octopus.

Ni'ihau

DEPTH 40 to 130 feet SKILL LEVEL Advanced

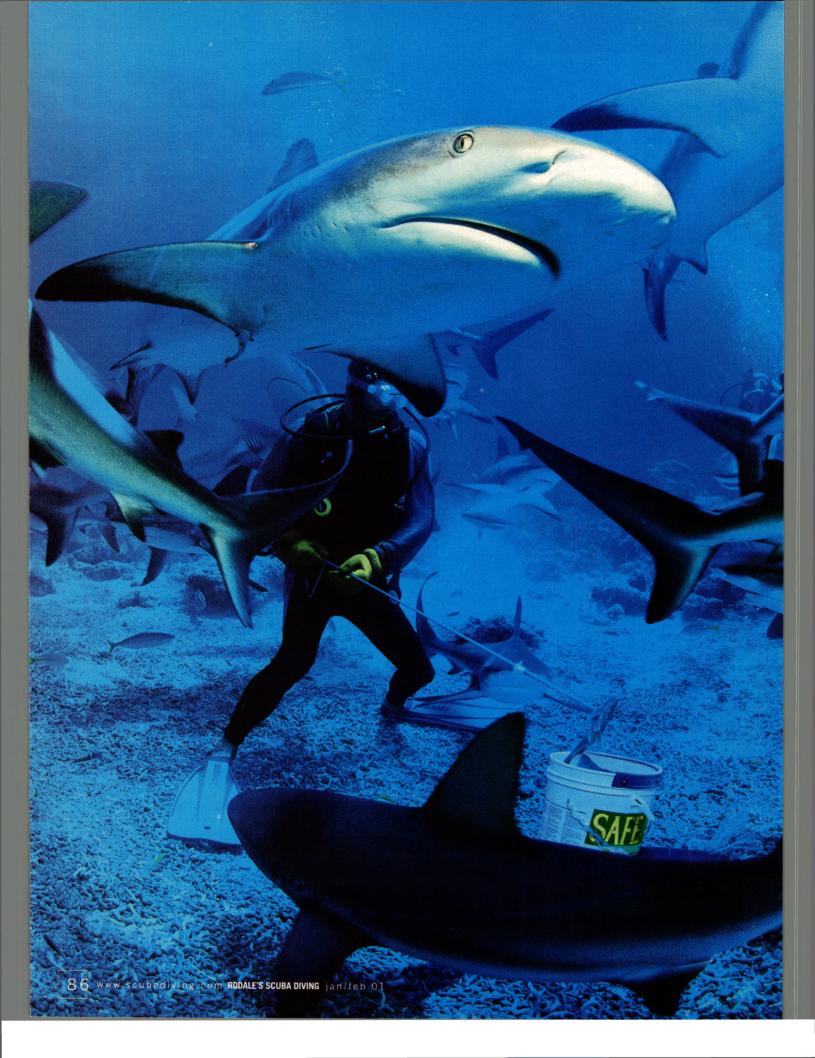
Lying 17 miles off the west coast of Kauai, locals say this is what Hawaii diving was like decades ago. The island has virtually no agricultural runoff, allowing visibility to soar to 200 feet. Spiny and slipper lobster throng the caves and tunnels which are also mobbed by Moorish idols, tangs and butterflyfish. Ni'ihau is in no danger of being overrun by visitors: It's diveable only about 80 days a year, most often during the summer months.

Sheraton Caverns DEPTH 20 to 60 feet SKILL LEVEL Novice to inter-

mediate

This series of lava tubes is one of the most frequented dive sites on Kauai, and for good reason. It's located directly in front of the Sheraton Hotel in 35 to 60 feet of water. Hawaiian turkeyfish, several species of lobster, wrasse and eels call this site home. As a result of seeing divers nearly every day, most of the creatures here are very approachable. Some of the largest green sea turtles in Hawaii-both male and female—can be found here. Because they prefer the more northern portion of the state, it's unusual to find male turtles around Hawaii's other main islands.

To read Hawaii Advertiser Directory, turn to page 128.



By the readers and editors of RSD

bound!

For a break from the winter blahs, wrap your nitrogen-starved mind around this: There is a place with 700 islands surrounded by miles of clear water filled with walls, wrecks, reefs and sharks — lots and lots of sharks. And if you packed right now, you could be there tomorrow, enjoying it all for prices that most divers consider a value.

We call it the Bahamas. And with help from our readers, here are some of the top spots in the islands you wish you could call home.

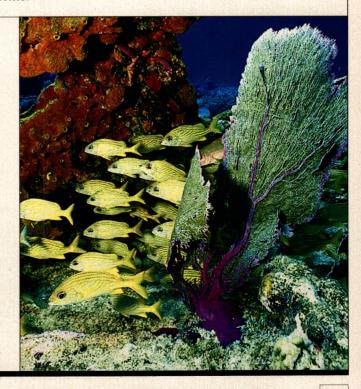
Survey says ...

Reader comments are provided only for those dive operators, live-aboards and resorts that received a minimum number of surveys in our Top 100 Readers' Choice Survey. For a complete list of operators, visit www.bahamasdiving.com.

Been to the Bahamas Lately? Rate Your Trip

Fill out our Reader Ratings survey for any trip you've taken to the Bahamas (or any other destination) in the past year, and you might win big prizes. Simply go to www.scubadiving.com/readersrate. Your responses will help create the Top 100 Readers' Choice Awards, and you'll be entered into our Reader Ratings Sweepstakes, for a chance to win dive trips and scuba gear.

You want big animals? Four of the top five big animal destinations in the Caribbean, according to our readers, are in the Bahamas. But don't forget the country's lush reefs, too (right).



YOU'LL LOVE Big Animals, Visibility, Walls.

ISLAND SNAPSHOT The greatest concentration of resorts and tourist facilities is in the glitzy Nassau/Paradise Island section of northern New Providence. But the best diving is found on the southwest corner. Problem? Nope. Most dive shops offer courtesy transportation. Nondivers will find plenty to do in historic Nassau, but serious divers focus on the dive attractions, specifically:

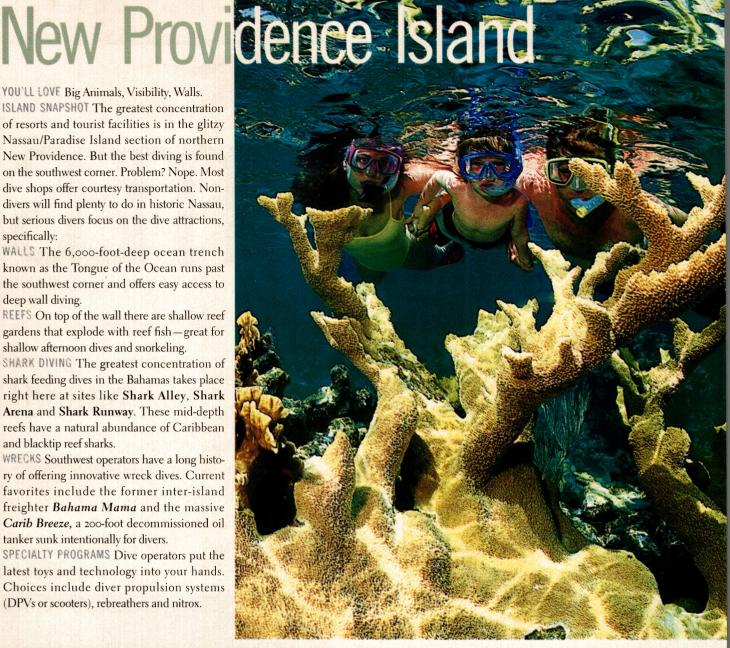
WALLS The 6,000-foot-deep ocean trench known as the Tongue of the Ocean runs past the southwest corner and offers easy access to deep wall diving.

REEFS On top of the wall there are shallow reef gardens that explode with reef fish - great for shallow afternoon dives and snorkeling.

SHARK DIVING The greatest concentration of shark feeding dives in the Bahamas takes place right here at sites like Shark Alley, Shark Arena and Shark Runway. These mid-depth reefs have a natural abundance of Caribbean and blacktip reef sharks.

WRECKS Southwest operators have a long history of offering innovative wreck dives. Current favorites include the former inter-island freighter Bahama Mama and the massive Carib Breeze, a 200-foot decommissioned oil tanker sunk intentionally for divers.

SPECIALTY PROGRAMS Dive operators put the latest toys and technology into your hands. Choices include diver propulsion systems (DPVs or scooters), rebreathers and nitrox.



What Our Readers Say: New Providence

DIVE OPERATORS

DIVE DIVE "A bit far from the city, but then that's a good thing too," say divers who stay at the adjacent villas and appreciate "opening their door onto the dive boat"; "experienced crew caters to all divers."

NASSAU SCUBA CENTRE "Well-organized" with clean boats and a "relaxed and accommodating" crew that will accept requests for specific dive sites; some say "expensive," but others have "no complaints and would dive with them any time." STUART COVE'S DIVE BAHAMAS "A first-class operation all the way," say new divers and old salts alike. "Wonderful dive staff and great customer service" helped some divers get over the hustle and bustle of a large operation.

RESORTS

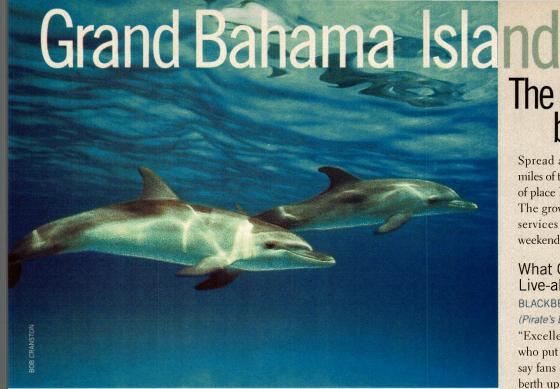
ATLANTIS PARADISE ISLAND A "first-class" mega-resort with prices to match, say readers who seemed almost overwhelmed by the facilities and the tab they ran up enjoying them. "It's truly spectacular—the shopping, the aquarium, the layout. You're sure to see a celebrity or two while you're here."

CLARION RESORT SOUTH OCEAN "The best part of the hotel is Stuart Cove's dive shop," say guests of the largest resort on the southwest corner. They found fault with other aspects, from frequent air-conditioner breakdowns to expensive food and unhelpful staff. Others were more charitable: "Clarion is making great strides to revive a hotel beset with problems."

Editor's Note: Long the doormat of our readers' ratings of New Providence resorts, this property is finally getting the attention it needs—and deserves. Located on a secluded part of the island, with tennis courts and an 18-hole golf course and Jamaican mahogany throughout, the Clarion is a stately, sprawling resort that needs only good management and updated infrastructure to realize great potential. Clarion reports that the second phase of a \$13 million renovation is scheduled for completion in early 2001.

NEW PROVIDENCE DIVING

"Diversity of sites is the fun part—wrecks, reefs, fish and large marine animals." P.L., Midlothian, Va.



YOU'LL LOVE Big Animals, Visibility, Beginner Diving.

ISLAND SNAPSHOT Tourist-ready, easy to get to and filled with something for everyone, Grand Bahama is second in popularity only to New Providence. Divers know the island as the home of adventure diving packages, but non-divers will find casinos, shopping districts and topside attractions to stay busy while you explore:

SHARK DIVING Daily feeding dives, where guests watch an instructor feed sharks, are the biggest attraction. You can also opt for a high-end multi-day program that puts you in the feeder's suit. DOLPHIN DIVING A close second in popularity, the dolphin dive lets you interact on a reef with trained bottlenose dolphins. There are dolphin swims for non-divers, too.

WRECK DIVING The former cement freighter Theo's Wreck is intact and sitting on the edge of the continental shelf. Guided tours of the encrusted wreck offer safe penetration for divers.

REEFS The southern shore of Grand Bahama features three reef lines running parallel to shore. The outer reef bottoms out at about 80 feet on a dense reef of coral mazes. The middle reef is a series of coral patch reefs on a flat sand bottom.

What Our Readers Say: Grand Bahama

DIVE OPERATORS

UNEXSO "If you can't dive for any reason, you can get a refund," say devotees of this world-renowned operation. Offers "incredible" shark dives, albeit pricey, say some; the "accommodating" staff and "short boat rides" from Port Lucaya marina get "two thumbs up."

XANADU UNDERSEA ADVENTURES "Not a cattle boat operation," this Freeport-based dive shop "could have more equipment to sell," but far more divers were "impressed" with the "excellent" staff, boats and "on time transportation."

RESORTS

PORT LUCAYA RESORT AND YACHT CLUB A "quiet and comfortable" resort that's "clean as a pin." Located in the Port Lucaya marina complex, it's "close to the dive shop, and convenient for golf, and shopping, too."

GRAND BAHAMAS DIVING

"It's easy to get here, the residents are friendly and there's a variety of sea life." B.K., Irving, Texas

"Loved the shark dive experience. It exceeded my expectations." J.M., Dayton, Ohio

"The triple crown—dolphins, sharks and Theo's Wreck—is a must for all divers." H.H., Pasadena, Fla.

The Bahamas by Live-aboard

Spread across more than 100,000 square miles of the Atlantic, the Bahamas is the kind of place live-aboards were invented to reach. The growing fleet offers an array of prices, services and itineraries, from bare-bones weekend sails to deluxe longer voyages.

What Our Readers Say: Live-aboards

BLACKBEARD'S CRUISES

(Pirate's Lady, Morning Star and Sea Explorer)

"Excellent value but best suited for those who put diving ahead of creature comforts," say fans of the 65-foot motor/sail boats that berth up to 22 divers on a cruise. Most raved about the diving ("great!") and the crew ("terrific!"), but concluded, "If you don't like camping, don't go."

BLACKBEARD'S CRUISES (Cat Ppalu)

"Like it all," say guests who praised the food, the crew and the dive sites of this 65-foot catamaran with traditional cabins instead of berths. Readers also give it high marks for value.

NEKTON PILOT

Big cabins with private bathrooms, and a unique design that smooths out rough seas are hallmarks, but readers saved their highest praise for the crew. Beginners and old salts alike felt comfortable with the dive program. SEA FEVER DIVING CRUISES

"The staff took care of us from the moment we got on board," report 50-something advanced divers who appreciate pampering ("warm cookies after night dives") and independence. "Divemasters were available if you wanted them, but didn't intrude."

What's New In Live-Aboards

Beginning in summer 2001, there will be two new Bahamas live-aboards.

Aqua Cat, a 102-foot power catamaran, is scheduled to cruise from Nassau to the Exumas. Contact Aqua Cat Cruises at (888) 327-9600 or visit www.aquacatcruises.com.

Nekton Rorqual, a new SWATH-design boat from Nekton Diving Cruises, is scheduled to join the Nekton Pilot. Contact: Nekton Diving Cruises, (800) 899-6753 or visit www.nekton cruises.com.

While New Providence and Grand Bahama attract the bulk of divers with direct connections and lots of topside amenities, the Out Islands have a charm of their own. Here are the favorites of RSD readers.

San Salvador

YOU'LL LOVE Wall Diving, Advanced Diving, Value.

ISLAND SNAPSHOT In quiet San Salvador, the excitement is all under water. The best wall diving in the Bahamas starts just 500 yards offshore in about 50 feet of water, where it falls off sharp and vertical. Interesting coral formations on the face of the wall add excitement, as do big grouper, sea turtles and reef sharks - not to mention the occasional hammerhead.

Walker's Cav

YOU'LL LOVE Big Animals, Advanced Diving,

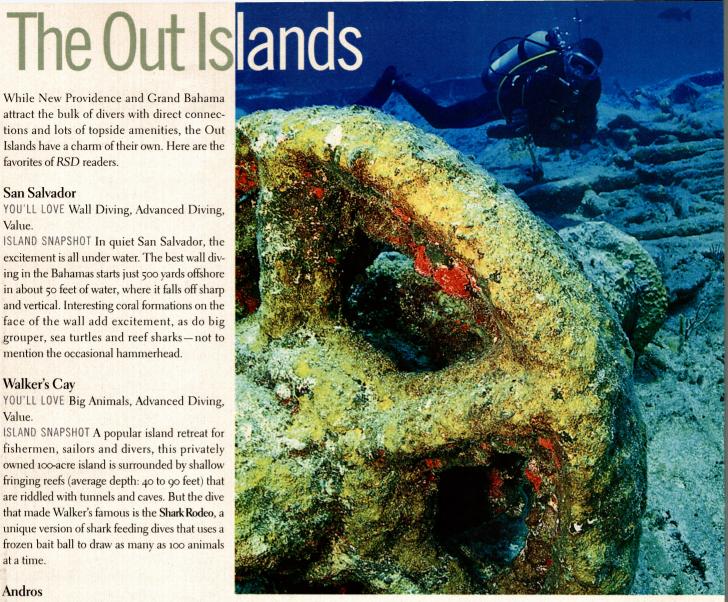
ISLAND SNAPSHOT A popular island retreat for fishermen, sailors and divers, this privately owned 100-acre island is surrounded by shallow fringing reefs (average depth: 40 to 90 feet) that are riddled with tunnels and caves. But the dive that made Walker's famous is the Shark Rodeo, a unique version of shark feeding dives that uses a frozen bait ball to draw as many as 100 animals at a time.

Andros

YOU'LL LOVE Wall Diving, Health of Reefs. ISLAND SNAPSHOT The largest and yet one of the least-populated of the Bahama islands, Andros is just 15 minutes by plane from the bustle of Nassau. Yet it remains an island of secluded beaches, scrub forests and intense diving. Along the east coast is a 142-mile barrier reef and the Tongue of the Ocean. Andros also boasts the country's largest ocean blue hole and more inland caverns than any of her sister islands. There are even a few wrecks, including the 70-foot-deep construction barge Marion, which makes an excellent night dive. There are three dive operations on the island. Our readers rated one, Small Hope Bay Lodge.

Bimini

YOU'LL LOVE Value, Health of Reefs, Fish Life. ISLAND SNAPSHOT Just 48 miles east of downtown Miami, Bimini is a playground for boaters, fishermen and divers who need a quick getaway. Bimini is not one island, but a string



What Our Readers Say: The Out Islands

SAN SALVADOR RESORTS

CLUB MED COLUMBUS ISLE

DIVE SHOP: "Nicest dive boats I have ever seen," say divers in awe of the equipment and facilities. Some experienced divers chafed at the Club Med style of big boats and controlling divernasters. "They treated us like we didn't know what we were doing," complained one. "Good for novices," say others,

RESORT: "A 5-star resort with food better than any cruise ship and lots of things to do besides diving."

RIDING ROCK INN

DIVE SHOP: "A knowledgeable staff that's willing to go where divers want," does all the work, you have all the fun. "Once you set up your equipment you never touch it again." Photographers like the on-site photo shop. and camera-ready dive boats.

RESORT: "Perfect for the true diver," say readers who also give the restaurant high marks for "excellent food" and "a nice mix of native dishes." Rooms are "clean and comfortable."

WALKER'S CAY RESORT

WALKER'S CAY

DIVE SHOP: A "well-run operation with a friendly, happy crew," which manages to be laid-back and safetyconscious at the same time, "made divers feel at home." So did excellent facilities and equipment, including a "roomy dive boat."

of islands teetering on the edge of the Gulf Stream. In addition to shallow and deep reefs, there are pods of wild spotted dolphins you can visit on special snorkeling excursions.

More Out Island Hideaways

The Abacos

This horseshoe-shaped archipelago stretches south along the eastern rim of the Little Bahama Bank. Two principal dive islands are: Green Turtle Cay Settled by loyalist planters who fled the American Revolution, this small fishing hamlet provide plenty of novice-friendly sites along with the historical wreck of the San Jacinto, a Civil War era steamship.

Marsh Harbour Marsh Harbour is the third largest settlement in the Bahamas, but it's still a one-stoplight town—literally. Patch reefs, ranging in depth from 25 to 70 feet, provide relaxing opportunities for all skill levels, but advanced divers can also seek out eerie blue holes.

Berry Islands

Strung along the northeastern edge of Grand Bahama Bank, the Berry Islands are a forgotten archipelago of cays perched on the edge of the Grand Bahama Bank. The largest, Chub Cay, provides access to sheer walls, deep ledges and reefs where the fish are *really* big.

Cat Island

Remote and unspoiled, this fishhook-shaped island on the eastern edge of the Bahama

plateau offers great snorkeling and shallow diving all along the southwest coast, but for deeper diving try wall dives of the northeast shore.

Eleuthera/Harbour Island/ Spanish Wells

More than 100 miles long but only two to three miles across, Eleuthera Island and its neighboring cays—Spanish Wells and Harbour Island—feature shallow fringing reef that caps the northern end of Eleuthera, offering shallow sites and historic wreck dives. Don't miss the Current Cut, a high-speed drift dive through a narrow reef channel.

The Exumas

The Exumas are a 100-mile line of cays and islets with diverse diving options. In the north, the Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park is a post-card-perfect preserve that is often a highlight of live-aboard cruises, while land-based diving from George Town, Great Exuma, offers shallow fringing reefs and ocean blue holes, like **Angelfish Blue Hole**, tucked away in shallow bays.

Long Island

Divers will enjoy accessible reefs on both the east and west sides of the island and close proximity to the virgin reefs of Rum Cay and Conception Island (which are also visited by liveaboards). Shark feeding dives, which got their start here in the 1970s, are still popular.

Dive In: Bahamas

WEATHER From December to May, temperatures average 60F to 75F degrees, while summer temps average 80F to 85F.

WATER CONDITIONS Winter water temps drop to the 70Fs while summer temps peak in the high 80Fs. Expect calms seas year-round, except during winter storms. Visibility is usually a consistent 100 feet.

MONEY MATTERS The Bahamian dollar is equal in value to the U.S. dollar and the two are used interchangeably. Credit cards and traveler's checks are accepted by most hotels and dive shops.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS U.S. residents need proof of citizenship such as a passport or a birth certificate and driver's license. Departure tax is \$15 for all islands, except Freeport on Grand Bahama, which is \$18, and must be paid in currency.

ELECTRICITY 110 volts, 60 cycles. U.S. appliances are compatible.

TELEPHONE Reliable service between the Bahamas and the U.S. is available. The Bahamas area code is 242.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Bahamas Ministry of Tourism: (800) 422-4262 or go to www.bahamas.com.

Bahamas Out Islands Promotion Board: (800) 688-4752 or go to www.bahama-out-islands.com.

RESORT: "Great food and friendly staff" plus "clean, cool rooms with comfortable beds," readers say of this small private-island resort and marina. "The people here treat you like they've known you for years," but they add "there's not much to do topside."

ANDROS RESORT

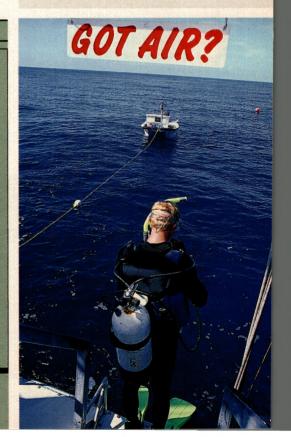
SMALL HOPE BAY LODGE

DIVE SHOP: An "excellent dive staff" that is "friendly and knowledgeable" helped readers get over dive boats that are "sometimes crowded and not set up very well." Advanced divers like the resort's specialty dive program that features deep, cavern and inland blue hole dives. Some thought the rental gear needed replacing. RESORT: "Great for honeymooners or for those wishing to do nothing," readers said of the beachfront bungalows that are "very basic, but clean and safe." Buffet-style meals and a friendly staff create "a very pleasant place to get away from it all."

BIMINI DIVE OPERATOR

BILL & NOWDLA KEEFE'S BIMINI UNDERSEA

"The staff was extremely professional, helpful, and friendly" and several readers praised their diversets by name. "They were great to dive with." Common complaints were the lack of fresh water on the boat and at the dock. Some felt dives were too controlled.



Bahamas Advertiser Directory

DIVE RESORTS AND OPERATORS

Bill & Nowdla Keefe's Bimini Undersea, North
Bimini (800) 348-4644, (305) 653-5572 e-mail
info@biminiundersea.com web www.biminiunder
sea.com ** Offers diving from North Bimini to South
Cat Cay. On-site owners who offer professional and
personal service. Best package 3-day, 4-night package starts at \$227 per person, dbl. occ.; 8-day, 7night package starts at \$814 per person, dbl. occ.

Exuma SCUBA Adventures, Exuma (800) 525-2210, (242) 336-2093 e-mail info@Exuma SCUBA.com web www.ExumaSCUBA.com ■ Exuma's newest dive operation located at the historic Club Peace & Plenty (32 rooms), built on the water's edge overlooking Elizabeth Harbour. Friendly, hands-on service for divers of all levels. The clear, calm waters surrounding the Exuma cays are an ideal place for beginners, and the region's blue holes are good for experienced divers. Best package From \$475 per person for two-night package with two-tank dive, accommodations, breakfast and dinner, airport transfers, hotel taxes and service.

Riding Rock Inn Resort & Marina, San Salvador (800) 272-1492 e-mail info@ridingrock.com web www.ridingrock.com Dives leeward and south ends of San Salvador. Offers beautiful oceanfront rooms, three boat dives daily and an underwater photo and video center.

Scuba Birnini Dive Resort, Birnini (800) 848-4073, (954) 524-6090 e-mail info@scubabimi ni.com web www.scubabimini.com ■ Newly remodeled waterfront hotel (16 rooms) with restaurant, bar, airconditioning and private baths. Only hotel with dive shop on-site. We have three boats. Best package Dive packages start at \$234 per person for three days. E-mail reservations@scubabimini.com.

Small Hope Bay Lodge, Andros (800) 223-6961, (242) 368-2013 e-mail SHBinfo@Small-Hope.com web www.SmallHope.com Twenty cottages (four are two-bedroom cottages), two beaches, 140 miles of reef, all-inclusive rates and a help-yourself bar. Casual atmosphere, families with kids welcome. We have been in operation for over 40 years. No one knows the Andros walls, ledge, gardens, caverns and blue holes better. Plus, we have shark, nitrox, DPVs and a full range of specialty dives.

Best package \$175 to \$235 per night all-inclusive rates, including accommodations, meals, beverages, three dives a day, hotel taxes, service charges

and airport transfers. Non-dive packages, snorkeling packages, specialty dives and special rates for kids and teens also available.

Stella Maris Resort Club, Long Island (800) 426-0466, (954) 359-8236 e-mail smrc@stellamarisre sort.com web www.stellamarisresort.com This Out Island resort and marina offers a remote destination with excellent diving, fishing and snorkeling. Dives Shark Reef, Conception Island Wall and the world's deepest blue hole. The resort has 50 hotel rooms and one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom cottages. Room rates range from \$120 to \$555 per night. Weekly packages also available.

Stuart Cove's Dive Bahamas, New Providence (800) 646-3333 or (954) 524-5755 e-mail info@stuartcove.com web www.stuartcove.com/rsd We dive wrecks, reefs, walls and underwater movie sites on the southwest side of New Providence Island, including Shark Wall, Southwest Reef, Razorback, Goulding Cay and three new wrecks over 200 feet in length-Carib Breeze, Abilin and the Anne-over 60 dive sites in all. Adventure programs include shark dives, Wall Flying (scooters) and nitrox. Facility includes large dive shop and a full-service underwater photo lab. Resort located on property. Six 40- to 45-foot dive boats. Best package \$353 per person, dbl. occ., at Clarion Resort includes 4 days and 3 nights accommodations, 2 days of diving, hotel taxes, gratuities, service charges and 500 frequent flyer miles per room. For travel from April 23 to Dec. 20, 2001.

UNEXSO, Grand Bahama (800) 992-DIVE, (954) 351-9889 web www.unexso.com ™ UNEXSO has more than 35 years of experience diving the world's most exciting diving adventures. Large animal encounters are our specialty. Enjoy a magical open ocean experience on our dolphin dive or watch sharks being fed at Shark Junction. We also dive Theo's Wreck, Ben's Cavern and Grand Bahama's reefs. Introducing all new facilities in spring 2001, including 20,000 feet of diving services, shopping, dolphin interactions and new Kodak imaging center.

Walker's Cay Hotel & Marina and Sea Below Dive Centre, Abaco (800) 925-5377, (242) 353-1252 e-mail walkerscay@mindspring.com web www.walk erscay.com = All sites are in a newly designated marine protected area north of Walker's Cay. Sites are within a 10-minute boat ride from the dock. No other dive operator in the Bahamas offers the combination of the thrilling Shark Rodeo and diving in

a protected area, all from a secluded, self-contained island resort. **Best package** 4 days, 3 nights, \$716 per person, dbl. occ., includes round-trip airfare from Fort Lauderdale, accommodations, breakfast and dinner daily, three dives daily, night dive, Shark Rodeo, hotel taxes, housekeepers' and meal gratuities.

LIVE-ABOARDS

Blackbeard's and Aqua Cat Cruises (888) 327-9600, (305) 888-3002 e-mail ro@blackbeard-cruises.com or ro@aquacatcruises.com web www. blackbeard-cruises.com or www.aquacatcruises.com The three Blackbeard's live-aboards (65 feet long, 22 passengers, 4 cabin areas) have Miami departures with itineraries to Bimini, Grand Bahama and Andros. An all-inclusive, 7-day, 6-night cruise is \$739 per diver. ■ The Aqua Cat (102 feet long, 22 passengers, 11 cabins) has Nassau departures with itineraries to Exuma and Eleuthera. Emphasis on ecology. An all-inclusive, 8-day, 7-night cruise is \$1,595 per passenger.

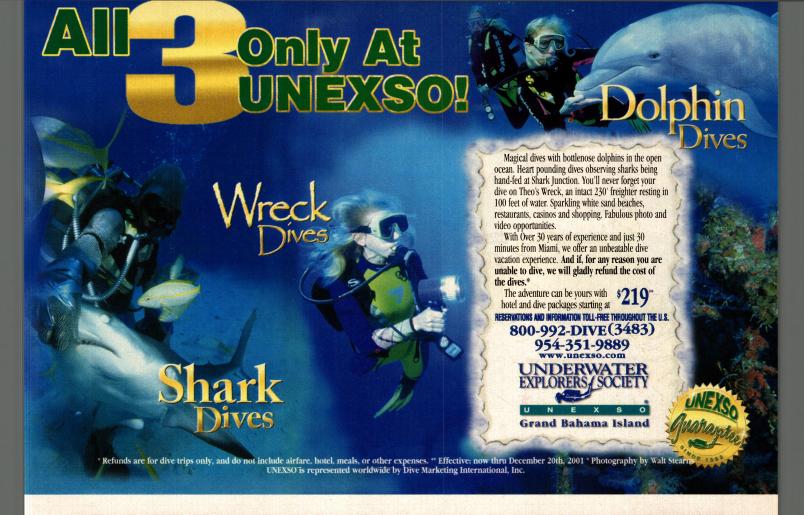
Nekton Pilot (800) 899-6753, (954) 463-9234 e-mail info@nektoncruises.com web www.nektoncruises.com ™ The Nekton Pilot offers itineraries that include Cay Sal Bank, the Biminis, Grand Bahama and White Sand Ridge. The 78-foot-long boat carries 32 passengers in 16 luxury air-conditioned cabins. Features a stable SWATH design, elevating dive platform, spacious cabins with private bath and shower, E-6 processing and environmental moorings at all sites. Best package \$1,495 for a week-long cruise, including all diving, tanks, weights, meals, snacks and transfers on sailing days. ™ Nekton Cruises will launch the Nekton Rorqual during the summer this year.

DIVE TRAVEL SPECIALISTS

World Dive Adventures / Caribbean Adventures (800) 433-3483, (954) 467-0821 e-mail margo@ worlddive.com web www.worlddive.com ■ 4 nights, 3 dive days (6 boat dives) with Stuart Cove's, \$467 per person, dbl. occ., including taxes and service charges.

TOURISM

Bahamas Diving Association (800) 866-DIVE, fax (305) 932-0051 e-mail info@bahamasdiving.com web www.bahamasdiving.com ■ Call for our publication, Bahamas Diver.





The Experience of the Bahamas

Diving Diversity & Bahamas Beautiful, what more could you ask for!

Andros, Exuma, Long Island, three places on earth that have heavenly diving with divine diversity, and a reputation to go with it. We can promise you fond memories when your choice is one of these fine dive destinations. Each unique in its own way. Each in a special place among the pristine islands off the coast of Florida.

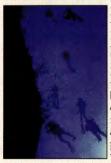


Located at Peace & Plenty Hotel



Under the direction of *Small Hope Bay Lodge*, Exuma's newest dive operation is sure to become the favorite place to be in George Town. Located at Club Peace & Plenty Hotel, ExumaSCUBA gives special attention to new and beginner divers. For all the dive details call us at: (242) 336-2893, cell, (242) 357-2259. For Peace & Plenty information, call our toll free number (800) 525) 2210, by Fax (242) 336-2093.

www.exumascuba.com www.peaceandplenty.com CHECK OUT OUR WEB SITES...



If diving diversity is what you want, Small Hope Bay Lodge is the place. The Andros Barrier Reef is the third longest reef system in the world, and we've been diving here for over 40 years. We have miles of walls, inland and ocean blue holes, pristine coral gardens, wrecks and "shark

observation" dives. It's all within a 20-minute boat ride from shore. Twenty cottages, all-inclusive rates. For information and reservations, call toll free - 800-223-6961
US/Canada, 242-368-2014, FAX 242-368-2015.

BAY LODGE

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www.smallhope.com

Andros Island, Bahamas





Probably the focal point of the best adventure diving in all of the Islands where nature is at its best. Heart pounding Shark Reef! The fantastic Conception Island Wall and of course...The World's Deepest Blue Hole! Catering to discerning individuals and small groups. Uncompromised dive facilities. For reservations or more information: (800) 426-0466 • (954) 359-8236 • Fax (954) 359-8238 • by E-Mail, smrc@stellamarisresort.com

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WALKER'S CAY

Close Encounters of the Bahamian Kind!

Winner of *Rodale's Scuba Diving's* 1997, 1998, and 1999 Readers' Choice Awards. More than 100 Black Tips, Caribbean Reef, Bull, Hammerhead and Lemon sharks swirl before you as they feed. At Walker's, venture to our superb dive sites including Spiral Cavern Reef, Pirates Cathedral and mysterious Spanish Cannon Reef, all just 10 minutes from our dock. Night dives, wreck dives, twilight dives and thrilling float dives are also available.

All dive packages include our shark dive and warm water buoyancy control workshop. Stay four or more nights and get your open water qualifying dives, or an upgrade to PADI Advanced Open Water Diver, absolutely free!



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 - · Breakfast/Dinner Daily



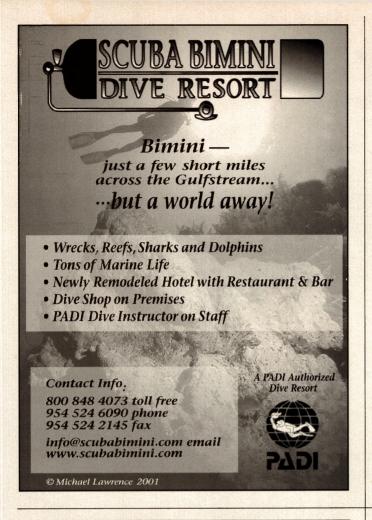
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E-mail: nealwatson@aol.com Internet: http://www.twofin.com/twofin/walkers.htm
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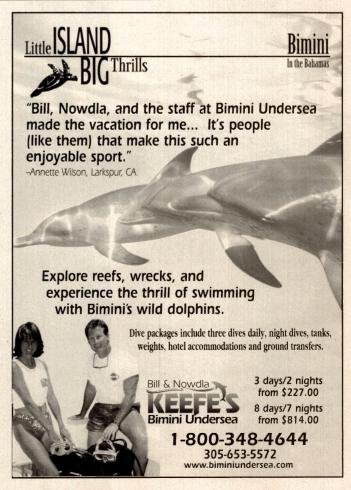


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Dry Suits

Being Cold Isn't Fun, It's Dangerous

By keeping water out, a dry suit significantly reduces the energy you have to expend to stay warm. This reduction in the physical and mental stress of maintaining thermal balance makes diving safer and more comfortable.

But this isn't a free ride. Dry suits are pricier than wetsuits, require additional training, cause more resistance to swimming and may even require you to modify your gear to accommodate the suit.

That said, if you want to increase your enjoyment and safety as a diver, a dry suit should be your next big purchase. In fact, as custom wetsuit prices increase and dry suits continue to improve, the advantages of dry suits multiply and the disadvantages decrease.

Test Criteria

We made a major effort in this evaluation to test dry suit functions that are important to the broad range of recreational divers. In this effort, we took care to test:

- ⇒ Valve flow rates—the ability of the exhaust valve to flow more air out of the suit than the inlet can put in.
- ⇒ Valve positioning—on the upper left arm, near the shoulder, facing upward, is usually the best.

Thanks to significant design improvements and better instruction, dry suit diving is now easier and more practical for recreational divers than ever before. Does that include you? Take the following quiz to find out—

- ⇒ Valve use—ease of operating inlet and exhaust valves.
- ⇒ Air shift—particularly to the boots.
- ⇒ Range of motion—under water and on the surface.
- ⇒ Ease of donning and doffing.
- ⇒ Quick disconnect—on the inlet valve.
- ⇒ Boot top interference—if the boot binds or rubs to inhibit ankle flexing, fin kick will lose efficiency.

The most gratifying aspect of these tests was the discovery of significant design improvements made by dry suit manufacturers. Most of today's dry suits are as good as the best of only a few years ago.

DRY SUIT QUIZ CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

SHOULD YOU DIVE DRY?

When I dive, I-

- become cold easily
- make long dives
- dive deep
- ☐ dive regularly in water colder than 60F to 65F
- move little during a dive, as when taking photos
- make lots of repetitive dives
- ☐ do some type of tech diving.

If you checked one or more, then you need a dry suit.

18 suits that recreational divers can really warm up to.

BY JON HARDY

ANDY'S offers three versions of its dry suit in multiple sizes and colors for both men and women. Tailoring and customizing are available, as are a full line of installed options and accessories.

The DS3 has a unique zipper that runs across the front shoulders, which makes for easy self donning and improved range of motion.

But this design causes the exhaust valve to be placed on the forward part of the upper arm, making it more difficult to use. The zipper arrangement also provides more freedom of movement, particularly in the upper body, but it also gives the air more space to move in.

All Andy's suits come with heavy-duty latex seals, inset crotch panel, oversized knee pads, insulated boots, carrying bag and maintenance kit. Owners instructions are only a single twosided sheet of paper. Price range for the Andy's line without extras: \$1,170 to \$1,909. WEB www.andysdrysuit.com.

ANDY'S DS3

Self-donning shell suit with latex seals

- Unique front zipper Sexcellent range of motion Excellent valve flow rates
- Position of exhaust valve Quick disconnect for inlet difficult to use Poot tops interfere with ankle movement

APOLLO MICROCELL 4.5 FX

Small-cell neoprene of 4.5mm; rear entry with latex seals

Ease of valve use Foot valves on ankles reduce likelihood of blow up & Good valve flow rates & Freedom of movement

Quick disconnect for inlet difficult to use

APOLLO dry suits have outstanding valves that are easy to use, are well positioned and flow well. The inlet valve activates by pushing from the side rather than inward, as most do. The ankle valves keep air from being trapped in the boots.

Apollo offers six sizes for men in the 3.5ex, but only one size for women. In the 4.5ex, there

are five men's sizes and three women's sizes. Boot sizing is also limited. Apollo suits also come with suspenders, knee pads and fin tabs. Owner's instructions are only several loose pages, but do cover all the essential features.

The use of small-cell neoprene provides greater freedom of movement, less drag through the water and performance more like a wetsuit. Price: \$899 for the 4.5ex and \$1,200 for the 3.5ex. WEB www.apollosportsusa.com.

ATLAN'S E 100 Sport is an excellent budgetclass dry suit providing the ease of donning, stretch and range of motion most often characteristic of neoprene dry suits. Atlan also offers three other models of dry suits, including a trilaminate shell suit, another neoprene and a commercial suit. All suits have knee pads, fin

ATLAN F 100 SPORT

7mm neoprene; rear entry with neoprene seals

- Sexcellent price Seasy donning Very good stretch and range of motion
- Boot tops interfere with ankle movement Quick disconnect for inlet difficult to use Position of exhaust valve

tabs, choice of color accent, several options, plus available customizing.

With this type of foam neoprene dry suit, you can expect to add some weight. On the E 100 Sport, the exhaust valve was just barely able to keep pace with the inlet valve. No owner's manual is supplied with this suit. Price: \$795 (for suit we tested). WEB www.Atlaninc.com.

Missing in Action

Thirty-one manufacturers or distributors of dry suits were contacted for this article. Of these. 18 responded in time to be included. Brooks Seal Suits submitted a suit, but too late to be included. Those companies that appear to have dry suits but did not submit them for evaluation include: Harvey's, KME, Northern Diver, Poseidon and Viking.





BARE TRILAM ATR-HD

Self-donning shell suit with latex or neoprene seals

Boot tops interfere with ankle movement Quick disconnect for inlet difficult to use

BARE has six models of dry suits with a variety of options and accessories in a wide range of sizes for both men and women.

The Trilam ATR-HD uses an Automatic Torso Recoil (ATR) system that maintains a tucked fold in the center of the suit, allowing the top and bottom of the suit to move vertically, independent of one another. The ATR sys-

tem provides for a better fit, while still offering excellent range of motion.

Among the available options is a provision to replace the 6mm neoprene hard-sole vulcanized boots with a soft boot that may reduce or eliminate the boot interference. A very thorough owner's manual and a carrying bag is provided with the suits. Price range for the line without extras: \$699.95 to \$1,599.95. WEB www.bare-wetsuits.com.

BAYLEY offers three basic models of dry suits with a variety of options available. All suits are custom-made, which, combined with the high-density closed-cell neoprene, makes for an excellent fit that still provides freedom of movement. Plus, there is less drag through the water and no additional weight is needed. Boots also do not interfere with fin kicking, and the fins fit just as they would with wetsuit boots.

BAYLEYSUIT AQUASTATIC

Multilayered material, primarily high density closed cell neoprene; rear entry with neoprene seals

Auto exhaust valves located on both wrists

The Aquastatic comes with silverdown on the inside of the torso, plus knee pads, hood and duffel bag. At no extra cost, you can have a dry hood with vertical rear zipper, rather than the horizontal rear zipper with separate hood. The owner's instructions are a brief booklet, but cover the basic information.

The automatic exhaust valves on the wrists flow well and are easy to use by simply raising your hand, but with one on each wrist, you will vent the suit whenever you reach up. We recommend ordering the suit with only one wrist valve or an adjustable exhaust valve in the usual upper left arm position. There is no cost for this change. Price range for line without extras is \$1,030 to \$1,800. TEL (707) 764-1772.

DIVING CONCEPTS PINNACLE

Self-donning compressed neoprene with latex seals

None

DIVING CONCEPTS is a relatively new company that has established a strong presence with both stock and custom suits, cut for men or women, and complemented by an excellent range of options. Three dry suit models include a shell suit, a 6.5mm neoprene suit and two thicknesses of the com-

pressed neoprene (4mm and 2mm). All suits come with suspenders, choice of latex or neoprene seals, hood and bag. The Pinnacle 200, as tested, also features Kevlar knee pads, reflective tape on the arms, a warm neck, wrist rings for dry gloves, wrist seal protectors and Kevlar seat pad. We also tested a cuff dump in place of the adjustable exhaust, and found it worked very well.

The dry gloves (see photo) are excellent, but the ring system to attach them makes the wrist very bulky. These would only be needed in extremely cold water. The Kevlar seat pad has hard edges and makes the suit stiff. We do not recommend it. The Diving Concepts owner's manual is outstanding, as is all of their printed material. Price range for line without extras: \$1,200 to \$1,850. WEB www.divingconcepts.com.

DRY SUIT TESTS AND TEST TEAM

Because fit is critical to proper dry suit use, not all evaluators were able to test dive all suits, but all suits were dived multiple times. The test team included:

Jon Hardy Vicki Durst, Bruce Haveri Jason Manix Lorraine Sadler DUI has been an innovator and the leading producer of dry suits for many years, providing the greatest range of selection available.

The CLx450 is truly self-donning. The fit and range of motion are both excellent, due to the telescoping torso, suspenders, internal waist adjustment cord and crotch strap. These features also work to provide a fit that does not permit excessive air shifts and does not require

DIVING UNLIMITED INTERNATIONAL CLX450

Excellent range of motion

Quick disconnect for inlet easy to use & Effective positioning of exhaust valve & Easy donning & Outstanding valve flow rate

None None

any additional weight. Also included are a warm neck collar, zipper guard, overlays or double layers in wear areas and a dry suit bag.

Rock Boots are a new innovation by DUI that provide better traction and wear resistance, and they can be fitted to many different dry suits or wetsuits. But any sturdy separate boot system will affect the fit and performance of fins. If you dive primarily from dive boats, regular dry suit boots are more than adequate.

DUI provides an outstanding owner's manual, plus several books and videotapes on dry suit diving. Price range for the line without extras: \$990 to \$2,778. WEB www.DUI-Online.com.

GATES PRO-CBX 450

Shell suit; rear entry with latex seals

Quick disconnect for inlet easy to use SEffective positioning of exhaust valve \(\rightarrow \) No boot interference

Poor valve flow rate

name and for other companies from its plant in Scotland. The suits are distributed primarily by commercial diving suppliers in the United States, and are also carried by Aqua Lung in Canada. Five women's sizes and 13 men's sizes

HENDERSON ARCTIC DRY II

7mm neoprene; rear entry with neoprene seals

Sexcellent price Very good stretch and range of

motion & Easy donning & No boot interference

Quick disconnect for inlet

are produced in three different color combinations. Some tailoring is also available for the four different models offered. The owner's manual is very complete and well done. Price range for line without extras: \$1,402 to \$1,885. TEL (011) 441387-269591.

HENDERSON is best known for a wide selection of wetsuits and skins. Henderson offers one dry suit, the Arctic Dry II, which comes in six men's and six women's sizes.

The placement of the rear entry zipper causes the exhaust valve to be lower on the left

arm, making it somewhat more difficult to position for use, but it does work well when in position.

As with other foam neoprene dry suits, you will most likely need to add more weight. Also, characteristic of these suits, the Arctic is easy donning, and the excellent stretch of the material adds to its range of motion. Knee pads are standard and both hoods and mitts are available. The owner's manual is well done. Price: \$699. WEB www.hendersonusa.com.

HIGH TIDE C 3000

Compressed neoprene, rear entry with neoprene seals

 Good range of motion
 Quick disconnect for inlet easy to use & Ease of donning

Boot tops interfere with ankle movement

HIGH TIDE is a new dry suit manufacturer. All of its suits are custom-made from a compressed neoprene or from a hybrid neoprene with other material layers. The C 3000 uses 4 mm neoprene, has knee pads, suspenders and a relief zipper for men. Also included in the

base price are undergarments and a carrying bag. The owner's manual is excellent.

As with other suits using a compressed or similar type neoprene, the C 3000 dives more like a wetsuit, requiring little or no extra weight, having less resistance to movement and fitting more closely while still being easy to don. Price range for the line without extras: \$1,595 to \$2,395. TEL (360) 551-0990.

GATES manufactures dry suits in its own



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PHOTO BY TIM PETERS

MOBBY'S TWIN SHELL PRO

Shell suit; rear-entry with latex seals

- ♦ Good range of motion ♦ Ease of donning ♦ Easy to use inlet valve & Exhaust valve well-positioned **Excellent valve flow rates**
- Quick disconnect for inlet difficult to use \$\ Boot tops interfere with ankle movement

MOBBY'S uses a unique system of an outer shell, for wear, durability and appearance, combined with an inner shell for a watertight seal. Together, they provide a comfortable, well-fitting suit of great versatility. You can change outer layers, or have it done for you by the dealer or at the factory. The outer layer has a waist belt that improves fit and also comes

with pockets. The outer shell is velcroed to the inner shell for ease of switching. The Twin Shell Pro we tested also comes standard with suspenders, leg zippers, a protective over zipper, reinforced knees and seat, patching material and a carry bag. Price: \$1,540 (for suit we tested). WEB www.mobbys.com.

OCEANER has five models of dry suits with several variations and options, plus multiple stock sizes and customizing for both men and women. All of these are neoprene suits, so they benefit from neoprene's greater stretch, making donning easier and increasing range of motion. The Titanium Polar comes with a cold-water collar, hood, knee pads and carrying bag. An "Extreme Package" is also avail-

OCEANER TITANIUM POLAR

- Ease of valve activation on both inlet and exhaust ♦ Good stretch and range of motion ♦ Excellent valve
- Quick disconnect for inlet valve difficult to use Exhaust valve poorly positioned Boot tops interfere with ankle movement

able that includes Kevlar knee pads, two pockets and double wrist cuffs. A thorough "Dry Suit User's Guide" also is provided. Valve placement is an option, so you can request that the exhaust be placed as near as possible to the optimum for most divers—on the upper left arm near the shoulder and facing up. The force required to activate both the inlet and exhaust valves was very low, and was among the best tested. Price range for line without extras: \$800 to \$1,260. WEB www.Oceaner.com.

OCFANIC AFRDURA

Shell suit; rear entry; latex seals

- Excellent range of motion Excellent valve flow
- Quick disconnect for inlet valve difficult to use
- Boot tops interfere with ankle movement
- Exhaust valve difficult to activate

OCEANIC AERDURA has a cordura ripple knee pad, called a Gill-Pad, which provides excellent flexibility along with abrasion protection. Also, unique to the Aerdura are adjustable ankle boot covers with built-in weight pouches. The weights go on the inside of the ankle cuff with a Velcro cover. A special type of weight would be needed to fit. The suit also has a pro-

vision for suspenders, comes with a cold-water over collar, fin tabs and an elastic back for increased mobility. The owner's instructions are excellent. The generous fit of this suit may require you to consider a size smaller than you might select in another line. Price: \$1,495 (for suit we tested). WEB www.OceanicWorldWide.com.

O'NEILL'S 7000x comes with knee pads, fin tabs and carrying bag, but no owner's manual. Boots, as supplied, were significantly oversized, adversely affecting fin fit and performance. There is no swivel on the inlet valve, which limits its positioning for use.

Consumer Alert: Two statements complete-

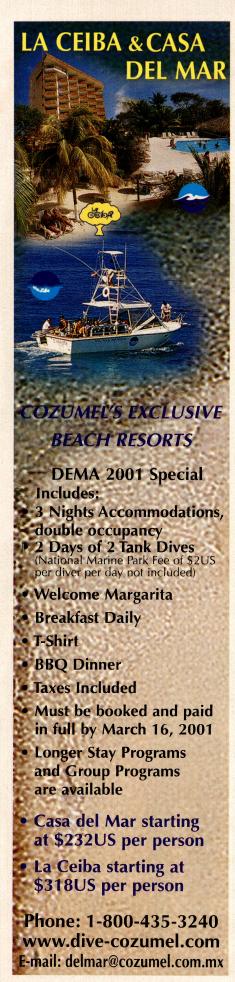
ly at odds with good practice in dry suit diving were supplied by O'Neill: "This suit is not designed to be used as a buoyancy compensator." Best thinking in the field is that you do not use your BC under water for buoyancy when wearing a dry suit, but that you use the dry suit to maintain neutral buoyancy. Also: "Important safety warning—hand tighten before each dive" is printed on the

suit by each valve. Even after hand tightening, both valves leaked. This should not be a consumer function. The valve should be tightened once at the factory. After the valves were tightened with a tool, they did not leak. Price: \$797.95. WEB www.oneill.com.

O'NEILL 7000X 7mm neoprene; rear entry; neoprene seals Excellent price Good stretch to material Exhaust valve poorly positioned Boot tops interfere with ankle movement Poor valve flow rates Quick disconnect for inlet valve difficult to use

Oceaner Titanium Polar Oceanic Aerdura anic exhaust valve O'Neill 7000X

SCUBALAB REVIEW



O.S. SYSTEMS SARR Self-donning shell suit; latex seals Ease of donning Excellent range of motion Well-positioned exhaust valve Exhaust valve easy to use Quick disconnect for inlet valve difficult to use

O.S. SYSTEMS' line of suits includes six different shell suits in both stock and custom cuts with a wealth of options available. The SARR dry suit supplied to us came with butt pad, knee pads, horizontal front zipper for self-entry, pocket, hood, ankle and wrist covers to protect seals, neck ring and carrying bag. The exhaust

valve was one of the easiest to activate of all the suits tested, but the inlet valve was one of the valves that took the most force to activate. The waist belt, along with elastic sewn into the wrist, plus the flap of material that goes over the front entry, helps to provide for easy entry and excellent range of motion. The additional material may require a longer weight belt. Price range for the line without extras: \$1,506 to \$2,128. WEB www.ossystems.com.

USIA offers three primary shell dry suits with options and packages including thermal undergarments. These are the most price-competitive shell suits available. As tested, the Aqualite provided excellent range of motion, but part of this was due to it being oversized. The oversizing also provided more space for the air to shift inside the suit. At the same time,

USIA AQUALITE

Shell suit; rear entry; latex seals

- Quick disconnect for inlet valve difficult to use
 No swivel on inlet valve Difficult to activate

the Aqualite required little or no additional weight. Position and activation of the exhaust valve are outstanding, but it takes a good deal more force than average to activate the inlet valve.

The Aqualite has full frontal thigh protection, boot protectors, ankle cuffs that restrict air flow to the feet, and comes with neck ring and carrying bag. The owner's manual is well done. Price range for line without extras \$650 to \$1,350. WEB www.usia.com.

WHITES AQUA PRO Shell; self-donning; latex seals Ease of donning Excellent range of motion Well-positioned exhaust valve Good valve flow rates Quick disconnect for inlet valve difficult to use

WHITES offers nine dry suits with a wealth of variations, options, accessories and an extensive line of undergarments. Several types of shell suits, neoprene suits and compressed neoprene suits are included in the line. There are 11 stock sizes for men and 6 for women, and custom suits are also available. Options run the gamut

of dry gloves, hoods, relief zippers and pockets, plus alternative valves and seals.

The Aqua Pro we tested included a cold water neck dam, waist draw cord, molded air control knee pads with adjustable ankle straps to help keep air out of the boots, suspenders and carrying bag. The owner's manual is small, but well done with lots of illustrations. Price range of line without extras: \$798 to \$1,898. WEB www.whitescoldwater.com.

ZEAGLE offers two dry suits, undergarments, plus a variety of accessories and options. There are 12 stock men's sizes and 9 women's, with customizing available. The Expedition GS, as tested, came with an insulated collar, suspenders, pockets, double layer of materials on the knees and lower legs, reflective patches

ZEAGLE EXPEDITION GS Self-donning shell; latex seals Good range of motion Excellent valve flow rate Easy to activate inlet valve Pexhaust valve poorly positioned Quick disconnect for inlet valve difficult to use

and carrying bag. The owner's manual is small, but well done. The Expedition's fit was loose, providing good range of motion, but also causing air shifts and more drag through the water. Check sizing charts carefully; you may need a size smaller than you expect. Price: \$1,799 (for suit we tested). WEB www.zeagle.com.

(continued on pg. 106)





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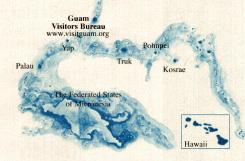
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DOB: 11/19/52 Texas, USA

Arrived in Yap

July 1976 Started Yap Dive

June 1986

Favorite beer: Manta Brew

about Bill: Graduate of University of Texas, and a Peace Corp Volunteer. Has sailed a traditional canoe between Eaurpik and Woleai atolls. Has a priceless collection of stone money under hotel bar. Has a weak spot for 'Tex-Mex'.

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SAM SCOTT

DOB: 03/28/62 Washington, USA Arrived in Palau: May 1982

Started Sam's Tours:

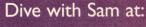
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Favorite beer: Local "Red Rooster

Mango Wheat"

Things you may not know about Sam:

Has logged over 7,500 dives in Palau. Sam is a proud grandpa. His first job on island was flipping burgers at the 'Rock Island Cafe'. His step father is a high-ranking traditional High Chief in Palau.





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TYPES OF DRY SUITS

FOAM NFOPRENE

Many dry suits are made out of the same material as a cold-water wetsuit, usually 7mm foam neoprene. The advantages of these suits often include:

- ⇒ Less cost
- ⇒ Little or no undergarments needed, unless it is particularly cold
- ⇒ If flooded, not all buoyancy is lost
- ⇒ Material stretches easily

Possible disadvantages include:

- ⇒ Both buoyancy and insulation value are reduced at depth
- ⇒ More weight may be needed to achieve proper trim
- ⇒ Heavier and bulkier than other dry suits
- ⇒ Slow drying

SHELL SUITS

These come in a wide variety of thin, synthetic materials that provide a barrier to water, but no insulation. Durability and ease of repair vary with the material. Advantages include:

- ⇒ Light weight
- ⇒ Pack easily in a small space
- ⇒Quick drying
- ⇒ Can provide the greatest insulation, therefore warmth, by layering undergarments

Possible disadvantages include:

- ⇒ More weight may be needed to achieve proper trim
- ⇒ Looser fit to accommodate undergarments or the lack of material stretch may make for a bulky suit, thus allowing more air to shift and creating more drag
- ⇒ No inherent insulation

CRUSHED OR SMALL CELL NEOPRENE

These suits use a thinner (2 to 4mm) neoprene and, therefore, are something of a compromise between foam neoprene and shell suits. Advantages may include:

- ⇒ Performance and fit are more
- like a wetsuit
- ⇒ Extra weight is not needed
- ⇒ Material is very rugged
- ⇒ Easier to repair

Possible disadvantages include:

- ⇒ Greater cost
- ⇒Slow drying





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94.4 PERCENT OF DIVERS said they would dive with this operator again.

READERS SAY S.M., Winter Park, Fla.: "Their boat is nice and spacious and great for those who tend to get a little seasick." May '00. D.S., Englewood, Fla.: "The pre-dive briefings were complete and accurate and the crew was always focused on safety." Sept. '00. J.R., Mill Creek, Wash .: "Boat is designed for stability-not speed or distance—so they wouldn't consider sites farther out ... Let us dive with a lot of freedom based on our computers and experience." March '00. J.B., Albuquerque, N.M.: "Liked the professionalism of the crew—they know how to have fun without sacrificing attention to divers or compromising safety ... Big emphasis on reef preservation." May '00.

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87.5 PERCENT OF DIVERS said they would dive with this operator again.

READERS SAY J.H., Waldorf, Md.: "Dive briefings were excellent and included site descriptions, current predictions and recommended compass bearings to get the most enjoyment out of each dive ... A post-dive roll call was conducted religiously after each dive." March '00. S.P., Tarrytown, N.Y.: "Their choice of dive sites was repetitive. They only went to four sites in our four diving days and we did 10 dives! Crew is, however, very attentive to safety." July '00. A.H., Evansville, Ind.: "Several rinse tanks for after the dive ... The crew understands the cameras and video systems, and they're willing to hand them to you and retrieve them from you in the water." July '00. M.B., Oakland, Calif .: "Loved the people, the boats were very nice and in great condition. The bad thing is there are up to 30 people per boat." July '00.

THE DIVING Two-tank morning dive, 8:30 to 12:30 p.m., \$60; two-tank afternoon dive, 1 to 5 p.m., \$60. Night dives Tuesday, Friday and Saturday.

The Florida Keys are consistently ranked in the top 5 destinations in North America for fish life, visibility and beginner diving by RSD readers.

NOTE: Scores are based on a response of more than 6,000 surveys. Overall scores for dive operators are derived by averaging their individual scores based on staff, boats, facilities and value. To ensure statistical validity, only those dive operators and resorts that were rated by 25 or more readers are included here. Changes or improvements may have been made since dive operator and resort information was gathered and may not be represented here.

FLORIDA KEYS AVERAGE: For each category, we averaged all the scores for dive operators and resorts to calculate average scores. They are given here for purposes of comparison.

FEATURES Two 42-foot boats (30 divers each); nitrox; camera-only rinse tanks; snorkel trips; specialty certifications; universal referral; photo shop/camera rental; intro to scuba programs; gear storage; retail/repair facilities; heads on boats; unguided diving; wreck diving. RESORT ON PREMISES Kelly's on the Bay.

BEST PACKAGE 3 nights, 4 dive trips, breakfast, tanks/weights, dbl. occ., excludes weekends and holidays, \$285 p.p.



CONCH REPUBLIC **DIVERS Tavernier**

TEL (800) 274-DIVE, (305) 852-1655 FAX (305) 853-0031

E-MAIL dive@conchrepublicdivers.com

WEB conchrepublicdivers.com

84.6 PERCENT OF DIVERS said they would dive

with this operator again.

READERS SAY L.D., Fairview, N.C.: "The crew knew where to take us according to diving conditions." Feb. '00. J.D., Syracuse, N.Y.: "Excellent service ... Laid-back atmosphere made us feel truly welcome and appreciated, didn't make us feel like we were tolerated because we were 'helping' with the boat loan. Loved diving with these people, will be back again and again!" June '00. M.B., Canton, N.C.: "Close parking ... Very safety-conscious ... Nice, shaded picnic area available with tables and full restrooms with showers on premises." Aug. '00. P.B., Atlanta, Ga.: "The shop had very few supplies." Sept. '00

THE DIVING Two-tank morning dive, 8:30 to 12:30 p.m., \$55 includes tanks/weights; two-tank afternoon dive, 1 to 5:30 p.m., \$55 includes tanks/weights. Night dives available every day and always on Friday.

FEATURES: One 40-foot (20 divers) and one 27-foot boat (6 divers); nitrox; camera-only rinse tanks; snorkel trips; specialty certifications; universal referral; camera rental; intro to scuba programs; separate boats for advanced divers; gear storage; retail/repair facilities; heads on boats; unguided diving; scuba kayak rentals; drift, wreck, night, wall and deep diving.

NEW FOR 2001 Total renovation of dive operation, including larger retail space, new compressors and fresh look for both dive vessels.

BEST PACKAGE PADI advanced open water course, includes five dives, all gear, boat and instruction fees, \$275; five charters including tanks/weights, \$220.



LADY CYANA DIVERS. INC. Islamorada

TEL (800) 221-8717, (305) 664-8717 FAX (305) 664-4443

E-MAIL ladycyana@ladycyana.com

WEB www.ladycyana.com

91.3 PERCENT OF DIVERS said they would dive

with this operator again.

READERS SAY M.B., Indianapolis, Ind.: "Although the boats seemed a bit crowded sometimes, these folks went out of their way to provide excellent and safe diving, expert reef fish ID and nitrox instructors, and general good will and good attitudes." July '00. D.E., Grosse Pointe, Mich.: "The boat is very large and stable, with a nice dry area and sunning area." July '00. T.A., Martin, Tenn.: "Lady Cyana is geared toward more advanced divers who want to do their own thing ... No time limits or depth limits." June

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'00. E.W., Clearwater, Fla.: "I have only had one bad experience here, but before I could complain they had already given me 'two for one' tickets for my next trip. This is exactly why I like the place-before anything becomes a problem, somebody from the staff will take care of it, and make sure that you are happy with your trip." July '00.

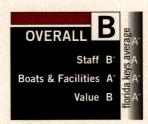
THE DIVING Two-tank morning dive, 8:30 to 12 p.m., \$45 (trip only), \$67 with tanks/weights; two-tank afternoon dive, 1 to 5 p.m., \$45 (trip only), \$67 with tanks/weights. Night dives upon request and when conditions allow.

FEATURES One 55-foot (24 divers) and one 40-foot boat (18 divers); nitrox; camera-only rinse tanks; snorkel trips; specialty certifications; universal referral; intro to scuba programs; gear storage; retail/repair facilities; handicapped-accessible; heads on boats; unguided diving; REEF field station; wreck and reef diving.

NEW FOR 2001 Freshly painted boats, gear storage, weekend hot dogs, sundeck for lounging

RESORT AFFILIATION Islamorada Motel

BEST PACKAGE 3 nights lodging, 3 days diving and nitrox course, dbl. occ., \$399 p.p.



OCEAN DIVERS **Key Largo**

TEL (800) 451-1113, (305) 451-1113 FAX (305) 451-5765 E-MAIL info@oceandivers.com WEB oceandivers.com

75 PERCENT OF DIVERS said they would dive

with this operator again.

READERS SAY J.R., Mill Creek, Wash.: "Nice boat with all necessary amenities-large

TOP 3 FAVORITE DIVE SITES

Upper Keys

92.3% of divers say they would return to the Upper Keys. These are the top sites that keep them coming back for more:

Molasses Reef **USCGC Duane** Eagle

Middle Keys

84.1% of divers say they would return to the Middle Keys, and most likely to dive our readers' favorite Middle Kevs sites:

Thunderbolt Sombrero Reef Samantha's Reef

(aka Shark Ledge)

Lower Keys

88.6% of divers say they would return to the Lower Keys. These are the top sites that keep them coming back for more:

Joe's Tug

Cayman Salvage Master

Sambos Reserve

enough to handle large numbers of clients and also to deal with rough conditions if encountered." July '00. B.N., Vermillion, S.D.: "Have trained with them before, very friendly instructors ... Don't dictate the dive plan." July '00. N.W., Battle Creek, Mich.: "The boats were roomy and clean and the staff was friendly and helpful ... I made 24 dives with this operation during the week I was there and they were great on every one."

THE DIVING Two-tank morning dive, 8 to 12 p.m., \$60; two-tank afternoon dive, 1 to 5 p.m., \$60. Night dives Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday. Wreck dives on the USCGC Duane and Bibb.

FEATURES Two 50-foot boats (32 divers); nitrox; E-6 processing; DPVs; camera-only rinse tanks; SASY; snorkel trips; specialty certifications; universal referral; photo shop/camera rental; intro to scuba programs; gear storage; retail/repair facilities; heads on boats;

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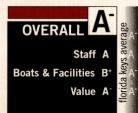
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RESORT ON PREMISES Marina del Mar Resort and Marina

BEST PACKAGE Land-view room, five nights, four dive charters, continental breakfast, tanks/weights, dbl. occ., \$782.33 p.p.

LOWER KEYS DIVE OPERATORS



KEY WEST DIVING **SOCIETY Key West**

TEL (305) 292-3221 FAX (305) 294-7177

E-MAIL kwds@keysconnection.com

WEB www.keywestdivingsociety.com

93.3 PERCENT OF DIVERS said they would dive with this operator again.

READERS SAY J.R., London, Ky.: "Rental equipment was in good shape ... Prices very competitive with other operations in area." Aug. '00. M.O., Tampa, Fla.: "Captain knows the available dive sites and goes to sites the other shops don't ... Their primary goal is for you to enjoy your trip, not to run a strict schedule. Sept. '00. J.R., Hayden, Colo.: "They left the sites open for us to decide after giving brief descriptions of many sites ... Because we had a fast boat, we were the first to the dive sites in the morning ... Clean shop, with cold beers waiting at the end of the day ... Very knowledgeable with marine life pre-dive briefing." Sept. '00. B.M., Key West, Fla.: "This operation is what Key West is all about kicking back and having fun, but don't get silly and start cutting safety steps because that's when they start getting serious ... They play by the rules and have fun doing it." Aug.

THE DIVING Two-tank morning dive, 9 to 1 p.m., \$45 without tanks, \$61 with tanks; twotank afternoon dive, 2 to 6 p.m., \$45 without tanks, \$61 with tanks. Night dives offered on request.

FEATURES 34-foot boat (12 divers or 18 snorkelers); camera-only rinse tanks; snorkel trips; specialty certifications; photo shop/camera rental; intro to scuba programs; gear storage; retail/repair facilities; heads on boats; unguided diving; REEF course; lobster/wreck/reef diving.

RESORT AFFILIATION Grand Key Resort.



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Key West

(800) 891-DIVE, (305) 292-9776

FAX (305) 296-6888

E-MAIL southpoint@aol.com

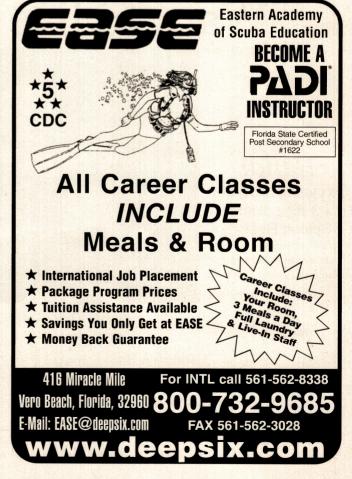
WEB www.southpointdivers.com

81.8 PERCENT OF DIVERS said they would dive

with this operator again.

READERS SAY M.J., Kansas City, Mo.: "Friendly staff with good knowledge and attention to safety ... Went out of their way to take my wife snorkeling (she had a cold and couldn't dive) while I went diving." May '00. S.P., Maryland Heights, Mo.: "The dive boat got us to and from the sites very quickly. Would have been nice to have some of the staff along on the dive to point out good spots on the reef." March '00. B.B., Fayetteville, Ark.: "Very safety-oriented, called roll and had each person initial by their name ... Fantastic boat, smooth ride, friendly, knowledgeable staff ... No choice of dive sites, had set schedule with no variances." April '00. P.F., Portsmouth, Va.: "It was a good diving experience, but the shop was small, and didn't have much gear for sale ... They didn't have restrooms for you to use ... I also thought that it was kind of expensive." April '00.





reader ratings



THE DIVING Two-tank morning dive, 9 to 1 p.m., \$54 with tanks; two-tank afternoon dive, 2 to 6 p.m., \$54 with tanks. Night dives Wednesday and Friday, or anytime there are five

FEATURES One 46-foot (20 divers) and one 33-foot boat (six divers); nitrox; DPVs; camera-only rinse tanks; specialty certifications; camera rental; intro to scuba programs; gear storage; retail/repair facilities; handicapped-accessible; heads on boats; wreck, night and reef diving

NEW FOR 2001 New, 46-foot custom dive boat.

RESORT AFFILIATIONS Hyatt Resort and Casa Marina.

BEST PACKAGE Three nights at Radisson, two dive trips with tanks/weights, dbl. occ., \$295 p.p.

UPPER KEYS RESORTS



AMY SLATE'S AMORAY DIVE RESORT Key Largo

TEL (800) 426-6729, (305) 451-3595 FAX (305) 453-9516

E-MAIL amoravdive@aol.com

WEB www.amoray.com

83.3 PERCENT OF DIVERS said they would stay at

this resort again.

READERS SAY J.D., Syracuse, N.Y.: "Room was very nice, well-decorated and clean ... Grounds are excellently groomed and kept." June '00. T.H., Fort Worth, Texas: "Rooms were just steps away from the dive boat. We stayed in one of the large apartments, which accommodated eight people comfortably ... Nice, clean kitchen and nice back porch."

April '00. L.H., Rockledge, Fla.: "The rooms had no inside table to eat or play cards on ... The staff was indifferent." Sept. '00. J.R., Mill Creek, Wash.: "Large, clean, beautiful rooms with kitchens in some ... Great views." March '00.

RATES Standard double for one night, \$80 to \$135.

FEATURES 25 rooms; beachfront property; pool; air-conditioning, refrigerator, kitchen facilities and balconies in rooms; hot tub/sauna; non-motorized watersports; wheelchairaccessible; all-inclusive packages; credit cards accepted.

DIVE OPERATION ON PREMISES Amy Slate's Amoray Dive.

BEST PACKAGE Four nights, four 2-tank trips, dbl. occ., \$350 p.p.



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TEL (305) 852-9376 FAX (305) 852-9200

E-MAIL islamotel@aol.com

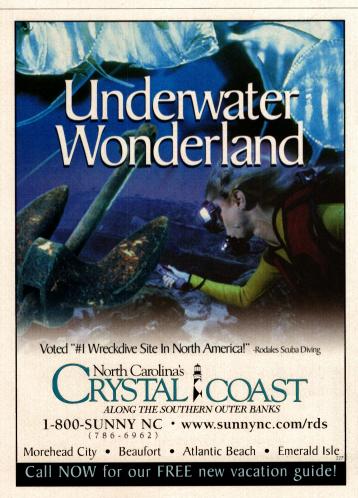
WEB www.islamoradamotel.com

100 PERCENT OF DIVERS said they would stay at this resort again.

READERS SAY S.M., Rockledge, Fla.: "It was a place to stay so that we could dive. We

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reader ratings



FLORIDA KEYS AT A GLANCE

UPPER KEYS

You'll love



BEGINNER DIVING





Not known for

Wall diving, big animals, drift diving

MIDDLE KEYS

You'll love



BEGINNER DIVING



FISH LIFE



VALUE

Not known for

Wall diving, big animals, shore diving

LOWER KEYS

You'll love



TOPSIDE ATTRACTIONS



VALUE



Not known for Shore diving, wall diving, big animals

slept most of the time we were there. The area behind the motel was beautiful for walking ... The beds were a little lumpy." Aug. '00. J.L., Wood River, III.: "Just what a diver needs—a clean room, friendly atmosphere, no frills, with a home-style feeling." June '00. C.F., Waterloo, lowa: "Very basic accommodations ... The staff is small, but nice ... Right on the highway and close to the dive operations and good restaurants." Aug. '00. E.B., Knightdale, N.C.: "The furnishings and the kitchen were somewhat outdated ... They only had a saltwater pool ... But still, the rooms were comfy and clean ... Didn't like the location on highway—much too noisy ... But would go there again as the price is right." April

RATES Standard double for one night, \$59 to \$79; \$79 to \$99 for rooms with kitchens.

FEATURES 13 rooms; saltwater pool; air-conditioning, telephone, refrigerator, kitchen facilities in rooms; barbecue grills; credit cards accepted; all-inclusive packages; eight dive shops within three miles that conduct instruction in motel pool. BEST PACKAGE See Lady Cyana Divers Inc., pg. 108.



KELLY'S ON THE BAY Key Largo

TEL (800) 226-0415, (305) 451-1622

FAX (305) 451-4623

E-MAIL kellysmo@aol.com

WEB www.aqua-nuts.com

90.5 PERCENT OF DIVERS said they would stay at this resort again.

REABERS SAY J.H., Waldorf, Md.: "Rooms are relatively small, but adequate ...

Continental breakfast was great for pre-dive carbos. Very convenient to roll out of bed, scarf down breakfast, jump on the dive boat and go." March '00. D.N., Aurora, Colo.: "Not plush-would upgrade the room next time ... Was nice that microwave, refrigerator and stove were included for those who wanted to save money." Jan. '00. J.B., Charlotte, N.C.: "Clean, diver-friendly rooms. Nice staff. Near good restaurants, dive shops." June '00. M.B., Oakland, Calif.: "The hotel lobby is a dive shop! This is a no-frills resort for divers only. They provided a continental breakfast in the morning, which was bagels, cereal, pancakes, juice and coffee." July '00. J.W., El Paso, Texas: "The convenience of boat, dock, equipment locker and storage was excellent." March '00.

RATES Standard double for one night, \$70 to \$110.

FEATURES 34 rooms; beachfront property; pool; air-conditioning, telephone, refrigerator, kitchen facilities in rooms; hot tub/sauna; non-motorized watersports; credit cards accepted.

DIVE OPERATOR ON PREMISES Aqua-Nut Divers.

BEST PACKAGE Three nights, four dive trips, breakfast, tanks/weights, dbl. occ., excludes weekends and holidays, \$285 p.p.



MARINA DEL MAR RESORT & MARINA **Key Largo**

TEL (800) 451-3483, (305) 451-4107

FAX (305) 451-1891

E-MAIL marina-del-mar@msn.com

WEB marinadelmar.com

58.3 PERCENT OF DIVERS said they would stay at this resort again.



READERS SAY K.M., Henryville, Ind.: "Friendly staff ... Good food at restaurant, but service came with a poor attitude at times." July 'OO. S.S., Sumter, S.C.: "Rooms were average size, but had plenty of extra touches, e.g., upscale fixtures, higher quality towels, etc. ... Had a small, but excellent pool area with perfect view of sunset from the shore." Sept. 'OO. R.J., Ocala, Fla.: "Rooms were extremely quiet even though they were quite full with guests." June 'OO. C.M., Davie, Fla.: "Full of other divers and right next door to Ocean Divers ... Basic motel room, but with fridge." May 'OO.

RATES Standard double for one night, \$99 to \$159.

FEATURES 76 rooms; restaurant; pool; tennis courts; fitness facility; bar; entertainment; spa; air-conditioning, telephone, refrigerator, kitchen facilities and balconies in rooms; non-motorized watersports; wheelchair-accessible; credit cards accepted; all-inclusive packages.

DIVE OPERATOR ON PREMISES Ocean Divers.



OCEAN POINTE SUITE RESORT

Tavernier

TEL (800) 882-9464, (305) 853-

3000 FAX (305) 853-3007

91.7 PERCENT OF DIVERS said they would stay at this resort again.

READERS SAY M.K., Plainsboro, N.J.: "Condo rental, so no maid service. However, full kitchen was a plus ... All units have 2 bathrooms, great for families and small groups." May '00. T.V., Charlotte, N.C.: "These are ocean-view condos in a gated community. Nice and quiet off the main drag. The price per night was similar to a nice hotel room and can accommodate four people (two bedrooms, two bathrooms). There is a marina, tennis courts, barbecue areas, beach. Very nice for families." May '00. N.C., Fremont, Ind.: "Liked the amenities, did not care for the drive to the dive shop." Sept. '00. E.C., Jacksonville, Fla.: "Staff could learn a little more about being courteous." Aug. '00. J.P., Bayside, N.Y.: "Big suites, great facilities and perfect location between Pennekamp Park and dive store." March '00.

RATES Standard for one night, \$180 to \$220.

FEATURES 143 rooms; beachfront property; pool; air-conditioning, telephone, refrigerator and kitchen facilities, balconies in rooms; hot tub/sauna credit cards accepted; kayaks, wheelchair-accessible.

BEST PACKAGE Dive packages available through Florida Keys Dive Center.

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By Ernest Campbell, M.D.



Is It Safe to Exercise After Diving?

Plus, chronic back pain and diving, kids and DCS, and finding a decent insect repellent.

Ed.'s note: Answers to questions are offered as information only and not as medical diagnosis or advice and should always be used in conjunction with advice from your personal diving physician.

When Is It Safe To Exercise After Diving?

Will the residual nitrogen in my system from a dive affect my cardiovascular system when I do an aerobic workout the next day?

Robin Andrus, Jersey City, N.J.

We get asked this question a lot, especially from dedicated runners, swimmers, hikers and gym rats. It takes about 24 hours to eliminate residual nitrogen from your body. There is some debate about whether exercise, especially strenuous activities such as running or mountain climbing, is risky during that period of time. Those who advise divers not to exercise immediately after diving say that it might increase the chances of bubble formation from residual nitrogen levels.

The research on exercise after diving can be contradictory. There are some inconclusive reports that point to physical stress as the cause of DCS in some divers who exercise after diving. But there is also evidence that exercising while decompressing is helpful in reducing decompression accidents.

TAKE THE DOCTOR'S ADVICE

⇒ Always rest after diving. Take a minimum twohour surface interval before doing anything strenuous.

⇒ Do not free dive between dives; relaxed snorkeling or swimming is OK.

⇒ Eat something, like a healthy snack, and drink lots of fluids

TRAVEL EXERCISE

Here's a light workout to help maintain your dive fitness when you're away from home (and the gym):

WARM-UP

Run in place or do jumping jacks for three to five minutes. Slowly increase your rate.

STRETCHING EXERCISES

SHOULDER, ARM AND SIDE Clasp your hands and put them behind your head. Slowly turn to the right, alternating to work the opposite arm. Do 10 times on each side.

LOWER BACK Lie down on the floor and pull knees to chest. Slowly lower your knees to the right. Hold for one minute. Reverse.

TORSO From seated position, place right foot outside of left knee. Extend left arm outside of right knee, turn to the left and look behind you.

HAMSTRING, LOWER BACK AND HIPS Sit on the floor with legs spread in front, pull right foot up to the left inner thigh. Bend and reach to the left knee. Alternate.

STRENGTH EXERCISES

PUSH-UPS If unable to do a push-up, leave knees on the floor throughout the exercise. Do 10 to 35.

SHOULDER RAISE (SHOULDER, UPPER BACK) Standing in an erect position with feet apart, raise arms directly up from sides as far as allowed by flexibility. Lower slowly. Weighted objects in each hand will increase the benefit (towels, books, shoes, loaded hangers). Do 10 to 30

SIT-UPS (ABDOMEN) Lie on back with knees bent and hands on abdomen. Tuck chin, curl upper body, lifting shoulders off the floor. Return slowly to starting position.

LOWER BODY (HIPS, BUTTOCKS, THIGHS, CALVES) Stand erect with hands on back of head and feet apart. Stride forward until other knee just touches the floor and push back up immediately. Alternate right and left leg. Do 5 to 15 on each leg.

COOL DOWN

Similar to the warm-up, but at an easier pace.

A survey of runners in the London marathon found that those who had had sex the night before the race ran faster than those who had abstained. Onethird of the respondents also said running had improved their sex life. Whole Health MD Advisor (July 2000)







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How Do I Keep Bugs From Bugging Me?

What insect repellent do you recommend to prevent mosquito, sand fly and other insect bites? I collected over 30 bites in five days of otherwise great diving in the Dominican Republic, despite head-to-toe spraying with Off! insect repellent.

> Larry Schnabel Rolling Hills, Calif.

There are no repellents that are 100 percent effective in preventing insect bites; if you only got 30 bites in five days in the Dominican Republic, I'd say that the Off! was 95 percent effective. Your choices:

DEET: N,N-diethyl-3-methylbenzamide (better known as DEET) is the most effective and best-studied insect repellent currently on the market and is the active ingredient in Off! When DEET-based repellents are used in combination with permethrin-treated clothing (see below), protection against bites of nearly 100 percent can be achieved. Plant-based repellents are generally less effective than DEET- based products.

HourGuard: The 3M Company developed a slow-release, polymer-based product named HourGuard that contains 35 percent DEET; this is the repellent used by U.S. military personnel. It's distributed by Amway Corp.

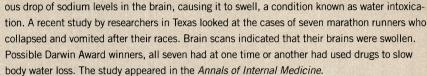
Skin-So-Soft: No-see-ums and sand flies use a different method to achieve their blood-sucking-by chewing the skin with mouth parts and an anti-coagulant. This is the reason sticky skin creams are effective at preventing their bites. Avon Skin-So-Soft can be mixed with

Off! in a spray bottle, and is fairly effective, though not 100 percent effective. Avon now markets products under the Skin-So-Soft label that contain an EPA-recognized

HEALTH & FITNESS NEWS

Water: Can You Drink Too Much?

While it's necessary for divers to stay well hydrated to reduce their risk of DCS, trying to do it all at once could be hazardous. Downing too much water at once during or right after strenuous exercise can cause a danger-



Fitness Bulletin (June 2000)

A Honey of a Post-Dive Snack

Findings presented at the annual meeting of the National Strength and Conditioning Association suggest that a combination of honey and a protein supplement may be the ideal post-workout snack. The mixture appears to help maintain a favorable blood sugar balance longer than most other forms of carbohydrate taken after a workout. In a study funded by the National Honey Board, researchers from the Exercise and Sport Nutrition Laboratory at the University of Memphis studied 39 men and women who participated in a heavy weight-lifting session. Right after the workout, the participants consumed a protein supplement mixed with a carbohydrate source of either sugar, maltodextrin or honey. Only the subjects taking the honey mixture sustained optimal blood sugar levels during the two hours after working out.

Newswise.com (June 23, 2000)

Snorkeling Deaths Could Be Prevented

A new study from Australia found a high number of snorkeling deaths over a 10-year period, many of which might have been prevented by routine safety training. Between 1987 and 1996, 60 deaths were reported. Many were due to shallow-water blackout (hypoxia with breath-holding after hyperventilation), which produced unconsciousness and subsequent drowning. Many snorkelers try to increase their underwater time by forcing themselves to hyperventilate. The researchers empha-

> size that this is an extremely dangerous practice, and should be discouraged. Many of the deaths were also attributed to the fact that the victim was snorkeling alone. The researchers feel that the outcomes would be different if several of the snorkelers would have had a buddy with them.

> > Sports Medicine Digest (Aug. 2000)

Bug Spray Verdict

No repellents are 100 percent effective. See above to find out just what these strange substances are made of and how effective they are alone or in combination with each other.



Guys: Regular Diving Can Improve Your Sex Life

In a first-of-its-kind study, researchers found that men who exercise regularly have less of a chance of developing erectile dysfunction (ED). Researchers from Boston University's School of Medicine and the New England Research Institutes examined 593 men between 40 and 70 and found that those who burned at least 200 calories a day by exercising (about the equivalent of a brisk two-mile walk) had less risk of developing ED. This is the first study to show that men who exercise, even those who begin exercising later in life, have less risk of ED than sedentary men.

Urology (Aug. 2000)



repellent. These products have very short halflives and are also effective against some mosquitoes.

Bite Blocker: Bite Blocker is a plant-based repellent that combines sovbean oil, geranium oil and coconut oil in a formulation that has been shown to be nearly 100 percent effective against mosquito bites.

Permanone: Permethrin (one common brand name is Permanone) is usually sold as a spray; it In the last few years, my back has been "going

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does not use DEET or citronella. It is sprayed on clothing, insect nets and the like (it is not applied topically). Permanone is found in outdoor sports and fishing/hunting stores and catalogues.

Did DCS Cause My Chronic Back Pain?

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out," landing me in bed for about two days. The last two episodes occurred on a dive boat, just after a dive. Both times, I felt a "pop" in my lower back. I am 39 and in good health. I work out three to five days a week, riding a stationary bike and lifting weights.

An orthopedic specialist says I have some arthritis in my right hip joint. He is concerned that the chronic pain is because of a diving-related injury. He said I might have a form of bends, and each subsequent dive is aggravating the injury further. I have an MRI scheduled in a month to see if bubbles are concentrated in my lower back area. What do you think?

> Huntington Beach, Calif.

Since you describe your back "going out" with a pop, I don't think your back problem has been caused by a decompression accident, especially since you don't mention any neurological symptoms. I suspect chronic lumbosacral strain or arthritis. The orthopedist is correct in noting that your hip problem could be due to diving since there's the possibility of dysbaric osteonecrosis in divers who have made poorly controlled deep dives. This would show up on an X-ray, and should be relatively easy to diagnose.

Bubbles wouldn't show up in diagnostic areas, but you would surely have had some neurological indication of this.

THE DOCTOR'S DIAGNOSIS

I think this is a mechanical back problem unrelated to diving. You need to be sure that the arthritis of the right hip is not dysbaric osteonecrosis. A thorough examination by a neurologist could settle this once and for all.



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testing as they don't hang around very long and are absorbed by the body. Their "footprints" remain as scars from the resulting tissue damage and as inflammation, which occurs with a decompression accident. Subsequent diving does seem to concentrate new bubbles in or around the areas of previous damage. The MRI might show damaged

(continued on pg. 120)



By Joel Dovenbarger, RN Vice President of Medical Services Divers Alert Network

Can I Dive After Having Herniated Disks?

Last spring, I injured my back, leaving me with three herniated discs. The pain was in my back, right buttock and calf. Months later, only the pain in my back is gone. I'm going to get an epidural block to help with the inflammation and pain and will continue to see a chiropractor. Oh, I did gain 10 pounds out of self-pity. Do I need to be careful how deep, when or where I dive, especially with regard to decompression sickness?

VIA E-MAIL

Herniation of the intervertebral discs can be a source of long-term pain and neurological deficit. Return to diving after this type of injury usually requires that the diver be fully recovered from his or her injury. Symptoms can be short-term and respond to oral medication for pain and swelling. Once there has been a complete relief of symptoms and the diver has returned to all of his or her former activities without restrictions, diving can be resumed

You might risk re-injuring your back while diving. Your personal physician will have to assess this risk. Your doctor must determine if activities such as lifting, twisting and other normal activities associated with diving increase your chance of further injury. Of course, you are the best judge of what you can tolerate.

The same is true of decompression illness (DCI). Although a theoretical risk exists, the circulation (impaired gas exchange) or nerve tissue

must be impaired in some manner to have gas transfer of nitrogen affected.

Otherwise, there is no evidence that a back injury will cause DCI. If DCI does occur at the site of your injury, then further disability could occur. Additionally, if a diver did develop symptoms after a dive, it might be difficult to determine whether it was related to diving or the back injury because symptoms can be similar.

If your physician feels you are at no greater risk of additional injury than normal, then perhaps you may consider diving again. It is wise to wait until all symptoms have cleared or your physician tells you your injury has stabilized. 0



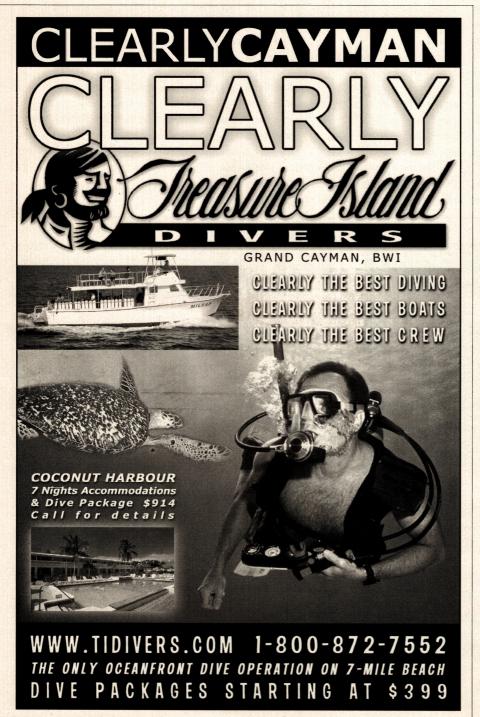




HEALTH & FITNESS NEWS

Paleolithic Workout: Sounds Almost Like Diving

Humans are still hunter-gatherers at heart and in body: adapted to long periods of inactivity interspersed with short bursts of extreme activity. That is the theory of Art De Vany, who proposes a stoneage workout: brief but intense exercise, more or less arbitrarily mixing the sort and intensity of the exercise. Having fun exercising is the last principle in his program, so we know he isn't a diver. Check out Art's web site: www.evolutionaryfitness.com.



Was My Son's Elbow Pain Caused by DCS?

Shortly after surfacing from an 86-foot dive, my 12-year-old son complained of moderate to severe pain in his elbow. Our computers were one dot in the vellow and our ascents and safety stops were by the book. I experienced no DCS symptoms. After the required surface interval, we made a second dive to 56 feet, even though my son's elbow still hurt.

When we returned to the boat, my son's elbow pain had stopped and didn't return. Is it possible he was slightly bent on his first dive, and that he "decompressed" on the second dive? Also, is there anything about a growing child's physiology that would predispose him to DCS?

Stone Hansard, Valparaiso, Fla.

It is entirely possible that your child had bubbles in his elbow, particularly if there was no trauma or previous history of arthritis. Joint pain from DCS would improve with recompression but would most likely have returned and worsened after the ascent from the second dive. This is not something you can prove, although an MRI of the elbow might be good to have in case of further difficulty.

There are issues to consider with children diving, such as diving's potential effects on lung, bone and other developing tissue. Children divers should stick to dive profiles that minimize their DCS risk to eliminate possible injury to growing tissues, such as the growth plates of bones. There are no studies that indicate that these growth plates (epiphyseal plates) are a particular problem-just suspicion that an area of increased vascularity might be more susceptible to bubbles. Since the damage that can be done to bone is directly proportional to the length of time at depth, time and depth should be restricted in the growing teenager. A teenager's ascent rates and safety stops should be carefully monitored.

Also of concern is patent foramen ovale, which can allow venous bubbles in the right side of the circulation to cross over into the arterial side and cause clinical bends or arterial gas embolism. It is known that the rate of closure of a patent foramen ovale in the heart is highly variable and in some children, it will not have closed by age 7. This is something that your pediatrician can check.



Help! My Reg Makes Me Gag

As a new diver (12 dives), I have a problem with a strong gag reflex when the regulator is in my mouth. Any ideas about a solution?

Sary Montgomery, Charlotte, N.C.

You could try mirror biofeedback. Using a mirror, start with a snorkel, inhale to the count of 4 and exhale to the count of 6 (relax as you exhale). Watch your face relax in the mirror. If you see your face, jaw, eyes, neck and shoulders relax, then you are doing it right. Then try the same exercise with tongue depressors in your mouth. Finally, try it with your reg mouthpiece.

It may be that the mouthpiece of your reg needs to be trimmed. Remove any excess silicone that extends back to your back teeth and trim the excess that hits the roof of your mouth. Another option is to swim laps in the pool with a snorkel until the gag reflex goes away. If you only experience it with a regulator mouthpiece and not with a snorkel (having a virtually identical mouthpiece), it may be that the gagging is anxiety-related, and not anatomical or physiological in nature.

Some dentists sprinkle sugar or salt on the tongue or palate before making dental impressions to inhibit the gag reflex. A topical anesthetic works well—especially Dyclone, which is longer-acting.

Finally, if these suggestions don't work for you, consider getting a full face mask.

Can I Dive with a Cold?

I canceled a recent dive trip because I had a bad cold. Was that really necessary?

🗟 via e-mail

You probably did the right thing. Nasal congestion and blockage can lead to sinus and middle ear barotrauma. And the resulting sinus infections and middle ear damage and infections can cause hearing loss and balance problems.

Ernest S. Campbell, M.D., FACS, lives in Orange Beach, Ala. He is a retired surgeon, avid diver and webmaster of "Diving Medicine Online."

Please send your dive medicine questions to RSD, 6600 Abercorn St., Suite 208, Savannah, GA 31405. Fax: (912) 351-0735. E-mail: edit@scubadiving.com.

ON THE W

For more information, visit these web sites.

Exercise and diving

www.gulftel.com/~scubadoc/exerdcs.html

Back pain, arthritis and diving www.scubadiving.com/training/medicine/backpain/

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www.scubadiving.com/training/medicine/age&dive.shtml

Head colds and diving

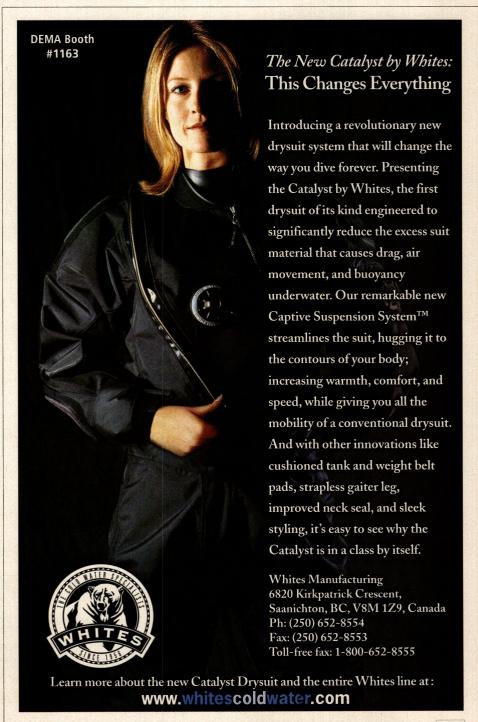
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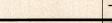
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Text and Photography by Stephen Frink



My Camera Flooded—Now What?

Tips to avoid Calamity, and first aid for when you don't.

flooded my first camera back in '79, my initial encounter with the awful truth about underwater photography equipment: If you take cameras in the water often enough, sooner or later, water will end up on the wrong side of the O-ring.

Since that time I've flooded plenty of underwater cameras and housings. Most floods were my fault and could have been avoided, but sometimes floods—like

DCS—just happen. Here are my tips for avoiding it when you can and taking care of it when you can't.

Flood Avoidance LOVE THY O-RINGS

An O-ring is the magical device that keeps water on the outside. Helping O-rings do their magic involves seven basic procedures:

Clean 'Em. The O-ring should be cleaned of grit, lint,

A clean, dry, well-lit workspace like this camera table on the Sun Dancer II (far left) is ideal for predive camera maintenance.





There are probably more than 500 O-rings in all the cameras on this table. Each one has the potential to cause a flood unless properly maintained. [1]



hair and detritus each time the camera door is opened or lens changed. Make sure the O-ring channel on the camera or housing is also clean.

⇒ Grease 'Em. Use only a very light coating of the appropriate O-ring grease. Put a dab on your finger and run the O-ring through. Don't put the O-ring in the groove and smear grease over it. Grease does not make the seal, it only minimizes friction when the O-ring is moved into place.

⇒ Inspect 'Em. Even a tiny hair left on the O-ring can disrupt the seal under pressure and cause a flood. Service your O-rings in good light and a clean environment, and wear magnification glasses if necessary.

⇒ Change 'Em. Change O-rings before they go flat. Orings compress and fatigue over time. At a certain point they won't be round anymore, and a flood is almost inevitable. The feel of a deformed O-ring is pretty obvious just by running it through your fingers, but small O-rings, like those on a battery compartment or strobe sync cord, A freshwater immersion in a commodious din tank is the best defense against the hazards of salt water. Fresh water displaces the salt water relatively easily if the immersion happens immediately after the dive.



Mr. fix-its: underwater camera and maintenance facilities

Backscatter Video and Photo 32 Cannery Row, Monterey, CA 93940, (831) 645-1082, sales@backscatter.com, www.hackscatter.com

Camera Tech 2308 Taraval St., San Francisco, CA 94116, (415) 242-1700, info@CameraTech.com, www.cameratech.com.

Mike Mesgleski Nikonos Service and Repair 10044 SW 221 St., Miami, FL 33190, (305) 234-0903, mmesgles ki@underwatercamerarepair.com. www.underwatercamerarepair.com. Sea Optics 201 S. Milpas St., #103,

Santa Barbara, CA 93103, (800) 480-8333, (805) 965-5050,

iames@seaoptics.com. www.seaoptic.com.

Southern Nikonos Service Center 9459 Kempwood, Houston, TX 77080, (713) 462-5436, www.southernnikonos.com.

Underwater Photo-Tech (USA) 16 Manning St., #103/104, Derry, NH 03038, (603) 432-1997, sales@uwphoto.com, www.uwphoto.com.

Underwater Photo-Tech Caribbean Kaya Beethoven 84, Curação, 011-5999-562-9774, uwphotocarib@att global.net, www.uwphoto.com

are more difficult to diagnose. Change the userreplaceable O-rings at least once a year as cheap anti-flood insurance. For internal Orings, professional maintenance service is neccessary. Depending on how frequently you use your cameras, visit a repair shop every year or two for replacement of internal O-rings.

Flood Avoidance

BATHE THY CAMERA

If we used our cameras only in fresh water, maintenance probably would be much simpler. But we go into the ocean. Minerals and

salts from seawater are left behind once the water evaporates. This grit finds its way into tiny orifices and can also disrupt the seal. That's why you should insist on a freshwater rinse bucket on every dive boat - and learn to use it properly:

- Rinse It. Put your cameras and strobes in fresh water immediately to displace the salt water. Operate the knobs, buttons and controls while it's immersed in fresh water.
- Remove It. Don't leave your camera in a crowded tank. Other divers may pile their cameras on top of yours. Sync cords can wrap

around lenses or extension tubes; then, if careless divers pull their cameras out, yours could flood in the rinse tank. Dome ports are especially vulnerable in this environment and can easily be scratched by contact with other equip-

⇒ Dry It. When changing film between dives, dry yourself and your camera before opening the back of the amphibious camera or housing. Work away from other divers who might be dripping, and open the camera back upsidedown so that any errant water droplets will fall away rather than inside.





Flood Diagnosis

A flood can happen even when you do everything right. The trick is to recognize it immediately and take immediate appropriate action. Your camera may be flooded if:

- ⇒ bubbles stream from camera back
- strobe fires spontaneously
- ⇒ strobe doesn't fire at all
- condensation collects in viewfinder or film counter window
- ⇒ difficulty occurs in advancing film

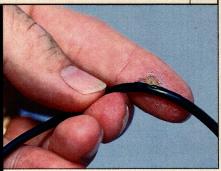
Flood First Aid THE FIRST STEPS

Since you could be several days from the nearest professional repair facility, what do you do about it? If it is a flooded Nikonos V, you'll probably wish you had brought along a copy of The Traveler's Guide to ER (Emergency Repair) for the Nikonos V Camera by Mike Haber and Mike Mesgleski. This handy little booklet provides step-by-step illustrated hints on how to get your wet camera operational again. Here are their suggestions for immediate first aid:

- ⇒ Turn off power by setting the camera to R, B
- Turn off strobe.
- > Keep camera upright and tilted slightly back to keep water in a single, reasonably nondamaging area.
- Rinse camera before opening back or removing strobe cords.
- ⇒ Remove film. The authors say "rewinding wet film may drag water across your shutter blades which may not yet have been affected. Open the camera and remove the film without rewinding."

But you have a choice: Wet E-6 slide film can be processed. If you get it into the lab before it dries out, it can be rinsed and run like any other film. But, if you open the camera and expose the film to light, it will be destroyed. You'll have to be the judge of how important the latent images might be. If it's a highly productive roll, rewind and take your chances.

Remove strobe cord and lens and examine closely for water damage. If the camera body floods, it is possible the lens did too, and maybe



A light coating of the appropriate grease is the first best step in keeping your O-rings happy and healthy. [1]

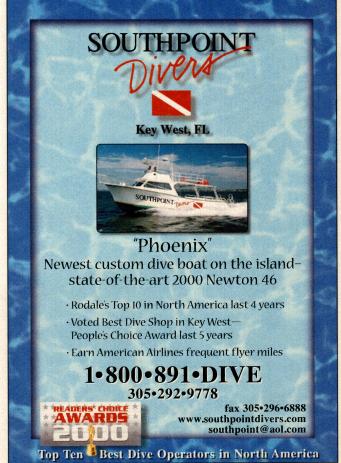
the water inside isn't obviously visible. It would be a shame to do thorough first aid on a flooded camera, get everything back in order, and then have water that is trapped in the lens seep back inside the camera body.

Flood First Aid

MAJOR AND MINOR SURGERY

With a very minor flood, the best move may be to dab out the droplets and keep working. However, if significant water intruded, and particu-





MY CAMERA WHAT DO I DO IF



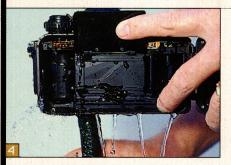
You'll probably see this depressing sight eventually. It could be a housing or an amphibious camera, but mistakes happen, and cameras get wet. [1]



In preparation for repair, use a small Phillips head screwdriver to remove the four screws on the cover to the electronics panel. [1]



Remove the cover and expose electronics module.



Insert garden hose into battery compartment and use sufficient water pressure to flush water through the camera. 1

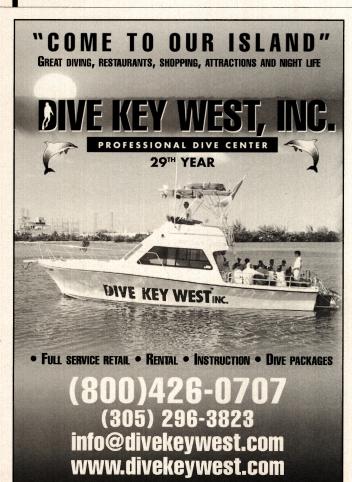
larly if you see water on the shutter blades, major surgery is recommended, beginning with some level of disassembly and a freshwater rinse.

Here's what I do with a flooded amphibious camera. Locate a Phillips head screwdriver, a garden hose and fresh water, and a hair dryer:

- Remove battery, film, lens and sync cord. Leave all ports open.
- Open camera back.
- ⇒ Use small Phillips head screwdriver to

remove four screws on inspection plate over the electronics module.

- ⇒ Prop pressure plate open by slipping it under the film advance lever.
- ⇒ Take a small garden hose (hose only, brass fitting cut off) and insert it into the battery port. Ideally, the hose diameter will nearly match that of the battery compartment. You may wish to carry a short length of this kind of hose in your travel kit.
- ⇒ Hold camera upright and use sufficient water



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pressure to flush fresh water up and over the electronics module. You'll begin to see water gently pouring over the shutter blades and over the electronics, but the fresh water won't go into the viewfinder (something to avoid at all costs, and the reason I don't completely immerse the camera in fresh water).

- Dry camera thoroughly by setting it inside a cardboard box, with back door open, and gently drying with a hair dryer.
- ⇒ Reinsert battery and test automatic (TTL) functions. Maybe everything will work again, but at least you'll probably have the mechanical functions back so you can shoot on manual.
- Send to a camera repair center for full service when you get home. Internal O-rings will definitely need relubrication.

This is not to imply only amphibious cameras flood. Actually, they are pretty rugged. It's just that there are more of them out there than any other underwater camera. Housed cameras can flood just as easily due to improper Oring maintenance or operator error.

Bad news: If you get most modern housed



A moisture alarm (note the two tiny prongs at the bottom of the housing) can help minimize flood damage. The best moisture alarms will have visible LEDs in the viewfinder, as well as an audible buzzer. [↑]



A housing will typically have a space at the bottom so that small bits of water don't hit the delicate camera inside. If you suspect a flood, keep the housing absolutely upright until you can open the back and dry the inside of the housing. Tipping it down may flood the lens, and tipping it up may flood the camera. [1]

electronic cameras wet, there is no means of economical repair, and you definitely won't get them operational in the field.

inside the housing, so a little water intrusion may never hit the camera at all. With a mois-

ture alarm properly installed, housed cameras are safe from minor floods.

Good news: There is a fair bit of space Contact Stephen Frink: e-mail: frinkphoto@aol. com, web: www.stephenfrink.com, post: Frink Photo, PO Box 2720, Key Largo, FL 33037.

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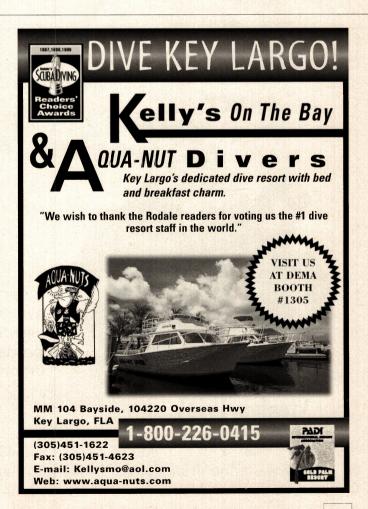
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(continued from pg. 85)

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(continued from pg. 79)

WHAT YOU SHOULD REMEMBER

- ⇒ Dive within your training and experience.
- ⇒ Take responsibility for your own safety.

Wall to Wall Trouble

Charles, 52, and Emma, 48, have been diving together for 13 years. They are vacationing at a popular Caribbean resort, and today are doing a wall dive with 12 other divers. The boat moors in 50 feet near the top of the wall and, though visibility is not good today, the boat captain, who doubles as the divernaster, tells the group that the wall is directly below the boat.

All the divers enter the water and descend in a group. Charles spots an air leak from Emma's first stage, probably a bad O-ring. They surface together to change her tank, and after five minutes re-enter the water. They don't realize that while they were changing Emma's tank, the dive boat has swung on its long mooring rope, and is now over deep water.

Charles and Emma descend below 60 feet without finding the bottom or the wall. All around them is a blue-green haze, with visibility about 30 feet. They guess the direction of the wall and start finning, but in fact are moving away from the wall. After finning a few minutes without finding it, they reverse direction. Both are becoming fatigued and Emma, who is following Charles, falls farther behind.

After a while, Charles glances back but can't see Emma. Alarmed, he searches in a circle but still can't find her. He surfaces rapidly and finds Emma on the surface, unconscious. The dive boat is more than 200 yards away, upcurrent, and does not respond when Charles yells and waves his arm.

When they are finally recovered, Emma is dead. The cause is listed as drowning, probably resulting when Emma became exhausted, over-breathed her regulator, panicked and lunged for the surface, swallowing water on the way up.

WHAT CHARLES AND EMMA FORGOT

Often a small problem leads to larger ones, causing an emergency far out of proportion to the precipitating event. In this case, a leaking O-ring led to a delayed, out-of-position entry, which led to the decision to look for the wall instead of surfacing. By this time, Charles was

so intent on his search that he neglected to check his buddy. Trying to keep up with the faster Charles, Emma became exhausted and demanded more air than her regulator could deliver.

WHAT YOU SHOULD REMEMBER

⇒ The time to intervene in a series of cascading problems is early. Perhaps a leaking O-ring alone should be enough to abort a dive. Certainly a delayed entry, separation from the dive guide and no wall where you expected it to be is enough. In any event, when in doubt,

⇒ Use your compass. Orient the dive site to the compass before entering the water so that if you have to make a search you will have a pretty good idea which way to go.

Buddy Check

Roger, 32, has been diving for six years. Standing at the entry door, he puts his feet into his fins, snaps the straps over his heels and makes his giant stride-just like he has done scores of times before.

This time, however, he fails to pull one strap high enough and it slips under the heel plate of his fin. He and his buddy exchange OK signs and descend. This is a drift dive, and the two float with the current until the divemaster signals the group to gather behind a large coral head. While Roger tries to fin out of the current, his unsecured fin comes off. Despite kicking desperately with the other fin, he is carried away by the current. Fortunately, the divemaster sees Roger's problem, swims to him, and helps him make a safe ascent.

WHAT ROGER FORGOT

Both Roger and his buddy neglected to check each other's gear carefully, not only on the boat while suiting up, but again in the water before descending. Roger forgot to be as careful about seemingly minor things like fin straps as he was about his regulator.

WHAT YOU SHOULD REMEMBER

⇒ A buddy check should be complete, from mask to fin, because small problems can escalate into bigger ones.

⇒The obligation to check your buddy's gear does not end on the boat before the dive. And it doesn't end with an in-the-water gear check. You should continually monitor your buddy and his equipment throughout the dive.



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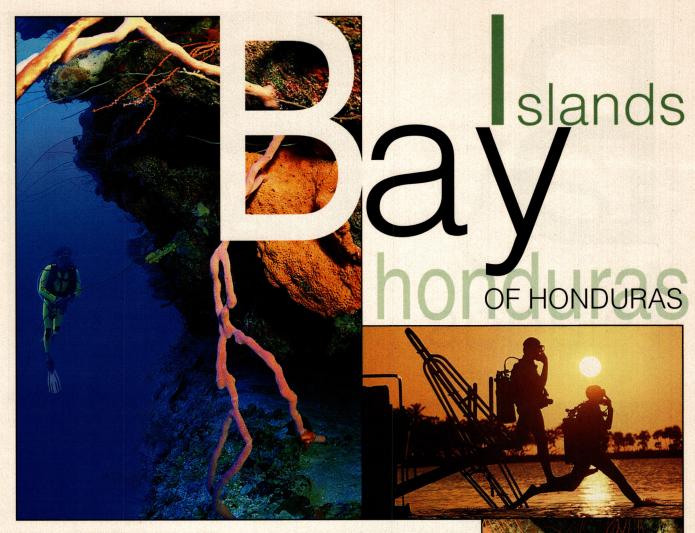
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you'll want to go back

Following the Great Maya Reef south along the coast of Belize will put you square into the Bay of Honduras, where the corals become fringing reefs around what is known to most scuba divers and eco-travelers as the Bay Islands. Three main islands are considered part of the Bay Islands — Roatan, Utila, and Guanaja — with some smaller islands, cays and over 60 tiny satellites in the vicinity. The islands are actually the very tips of a submerged mountain range known as the Bonacca ridge. The waters around the islands are generally very deep with canyons and passages leading into island ports referred to as bights.

dive the mountains

Terrain on the three islands is fairly similar and topography doesn't hide the fact that these are mountaintops. Not Alps mind you, but rainforest mountains covered in verdant landscape, requiring a machete-wielding guide as an exploration prerequisite. Utila is the flattest island sporting 210-foot Pumpkin Hill while Roatan,

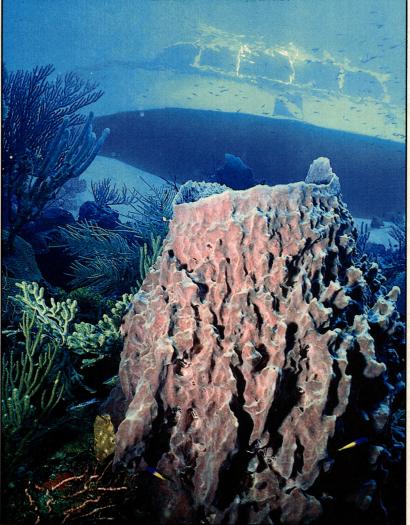
the largest island, has a hilltop ridge that peaks at 717 feet. Guanaja is a different story altogether, jutting straight up from the sea to form a pillar of a landmass.

roatan's evolution

Because of their relative obscurity, the islands have remained largely unchanged, although more development comes to Roatan each year. Roatan is the largest and most visited of the three islands, and aside from a few European backpackers, tourism has until recently been made up of underwater enthusiasts. Within the last 12 months, cruise ships have begun porting at Coxen Hole, one of Roatan's two main towns. Though these tourists are occasional and remain on the island for only a few hours at a time, changes will surely come to this sleepy little town. You can expect availability of more goods, more services, and newer, more upscale operations starting to take hold as an influx of commerce starts to feed the economy.

Slands





posh to budget

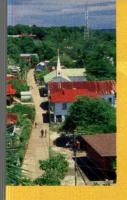
Roatan is also the place to go for the widest choice in dive resorts. With well over twenty establishments positioned on three sides of the island, you can find accommodations spanning posh to budget. Most of the operations are clean and friendly with up-to-date equipment and knowledgeable staff. The resort you choose will most likely determine which part of the island you dive because most operators dive near their respective ports. But, not to worry, diving anywhere in the Honduran Bay is a spectacular experience.

a labryinth of reefs

Typically, the reef around Roatan is close to shore with many channels and bays to break up the scenery. Walls, deep cuts, and coral fingers form an underwater maze of sorts and act as a perfect nursery for juvenile reef fish. No matter where you're diving in the Bay, there's always the possibility of spotting an occasional pelagic in the form of a shark, turtle, ray, dolphin, or even whale shark. Water temps range from the high 70s to the low 80s year-round and visibility is said to go as high as 100 feet, but expect an average of 60 feet.

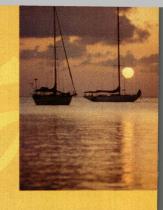
must-do dive sites

Popular south shore dive sites include Calvin's Crack, a long descent through a coral chamber that leads to a wall at 70 feet. Enchanted Forest and Valley of the Kings are





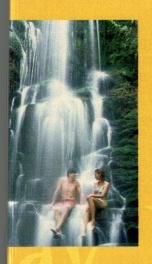




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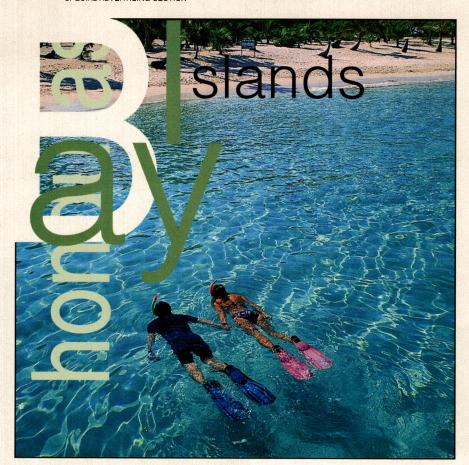
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also on the must-do list. Northern sites including Herbie's Fantasy are a good bet for spotting morays, sharks or even mantas. On the West End, you'll find a sand flat sprinkled with coral to a depth of about 40 feet, then a vertical drop into the abyss at West End Wall and Half Moon Bay.

guanaja

If you're sorting by size and population, Guanaja is the second island on the list of Bay Islands. But it is a sleepy village compared to its western neighbor. Most of the island's inhabitants are fishermen and live in the main town of Bonacca. There are no roads on Guanaja but it does have a paved runway. The geography around this towering island is as rugged underwater as it is topside. Submerged coral-covered seamounts dot the waters further offshore, creating magnificent diving opportunities. Close to shore, the walls start as shallow as 15 feet and caves, cuts, and rocky formations are the norm. Popular dive sites include Jim's Silver Load, a name given for the tunnels, passages and caves filled with writhing silversides. Toon Town finds you face to face with amazing populations of tunicates, and the most popular wreck dive in the Bay Islands, the Jado Trader, always offers a few surprises with groupers, morays, and schooling fishes that come and go with the seasons.

utila

Utila seems worlds apart from the other two islands. With only about 2,000 residents, it is the least visited by conventional travelers. Utila is well known to the European hostel market as the cheapest place on earth to get certified to scuba dive. There are also two dive resorts catering to a more mainstream clientele.

Diving Utila gives you a little taste of the best from all the other areas in the Bay Islands and chances are some of the best diving is yet to be discovered. Some say that diving in Utila offers the greatest chance to see the really large pelagics, namely, whale sharks.

relax, you're on vacation

Overall, dive services in the Bay Islands are first-rate companies offering an excellent value and an exceptional diving experience. Some travelers feel the Bay Islands are more akin to a South Pacific experience than a Caribbean one because of their lush jungles and slowly developing cultures. Most just appreciate the relaxed atmosphere and the ability to coax the stress from everyday life. However you experience the Bay Islands, you're sure to start planning for your next trip back as soon as you realize it's time to go home.



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Roatan, the Bay Islands of Honduras

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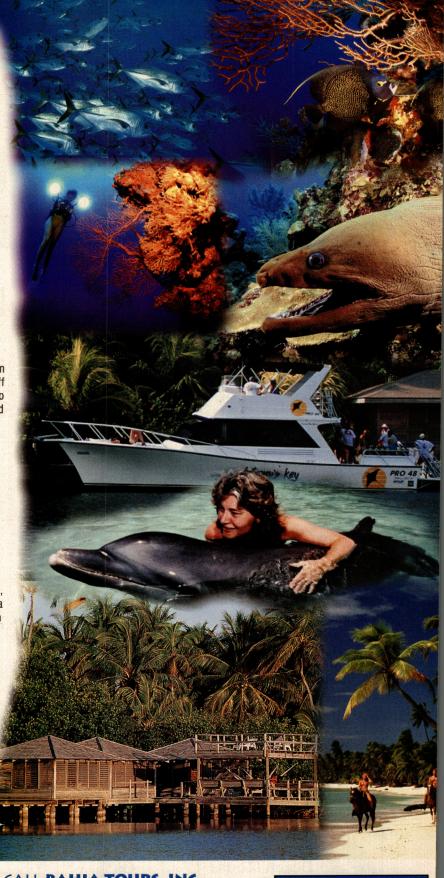
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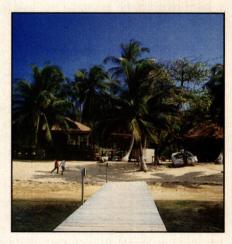
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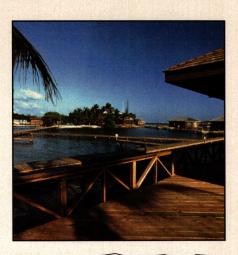
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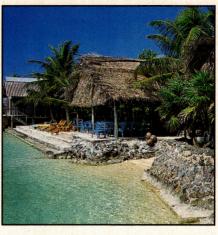
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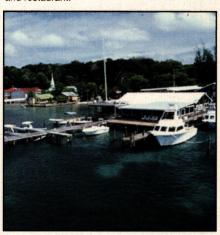
Utila

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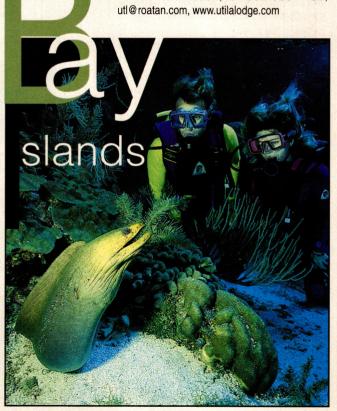
The 8 air-conditioned rooms have private balconies and porches built over the water. Guests will enjoy the large clubhouse, sundecks and boatdocks, as well as outdoor showers, rinse tanks, camera tanks, lockers, and restaurant.



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Scuba Schools International and Rodale's Scuba Diving salute this year's 28 new Platinum Pro Divers plus the more than 1,200 who were inducted from 1993-2000.

What does it take to become a Platinum Pro diver? The basic answer is 5,000 dives, but it's really so much more.



In 1992, Scuba Schools International (SSI) introduced the first dive recognition program.

It is a system for rewarding and recognizing divers for

the number of scuba dives they've made and their dedication to the sport. The Platinum Pro award is the highest level in this system. It honors divers who have completed 5,000 dives or more, or 2,500 dives, ten years in the industry, plus a significant contribution to the dive industry.

Nominations are made by existing Platinum Pro divers or you can submit an application yourself. For more information, contact SSI at 970-482-0883, www.ssiusa.com.

Plaitinaum 5000 Diver

2001 PLATINUM PRO DIVERS

Buckley, Nicholas
Denney, Ian Laurence
Diaz, Carlos Alberto
Edge, Martin
Eschmann, Hansi
Frusher, Robert E.
Girdlestone, Mark
Guzman, Carlos
Henderson, Thomas S.
Junge, Dierk
Koppelman, Jozef
Kristofic, David
McAfee, Kevin
Morris, Bud
Morris, Cathy







Rodriguez, Liberto Arbos
Ruth, Daniel H.
Selisky, Lee
Shourot, Robert J.
Sleath, Gavin
Story, Richard
Traversari, Roberto
Tseng, Robert H.
Vierow, Maurice William
Warburg, Gerard
Webster, M.D., Jeremy
Werneck, Marcus
White, Ralph B.
Williams, David

SSI'S PLATINUM PRO DIVERS

2000

Alber, Jens Aldrich, Art W. Badie, Georges Badie, Jean Marc 2000 Bantin, John Barron, Patrick R. Beattie, Paul Blanchard, Jean Louis Brandon, James C. Brogden, Graeme

Buchin, Teiva Burke, Doug Bux, Hans Chase, H. Keith Chase, Lynn J. Conlin, Tom Cowie, Jennifer Dawoud, General Mohamed Yousry de Bruijn, Lothar Delebart, Camille Fox, Linda L. Gleason, Kim Graves, Grant W. Hild, Johannes Hirsh, Aaron Hiyoshi, Ikuo Holbrook, Mike Hynds, Hank Iwasa, Kuniichi Johnson, Charlie Jones, Philip Andrew Kizawa, Wataru Krueger, Martin Kubota, Hiroshi Lefevre, Raymond Lewis Ph.D., John E. Manos, Christopher A. McDaniel, Charles Mirando, Alfonso Arnold Mitchell, Neil L. Molle, Philippe Moody, Sarah Morales, Jean Paul Morees, Jan Mortensen, Kirk Oberle Sr., Paul D. Opie, Ron Pouliquen, Henri Puig, Gerard Robles, Alberto Leonard Salamone, Edward S. Schaareman, Koos Schink, Wolfgang Silva, Jaime Mejia Snelder, Bart Spencer, John Stobie, Wayne Stoval, Sid Sugamata, Hisayuki Thackray, John Tonozuka, Takamasa Touloumdijan, Claude van Rooyen, Rolf Ignats Vifian, Johann Vifian, Verena Ximenes. Serge

Aldeguer, Jose Manuel Alentado, Armando A. Anno, Seiji Bennett, Peter B. Bereswill, Joseph W. Bergami, Paolo

Blanc, Roland Brkljacic, Miljenko Chalk, Karen Chivers, Clay Clendenen, William H.,1999 Cooper, Ed,1999 Copiskey, James A. Craw, Charles D. Dernier, Pierre Desogere, Alain Doeg, Colin Douwma, Georgette Falco, Albert Farrugia, Jean-Paul Ferrero, Achille Franklin III, Alfred A. Gladu, Yve Glomb, Uwe Gomez, Francisco Halas, John C. Halas, Judith Flenniken Hobson, Edmund Huver, Fabian Kato, Taihei Kishi, Yoji Lawson, Frederick Q. Lecorguille, Jo Lee, Stephen Matt, Gerry Mazeaud, Jean Francois Mori, Nobuyuki Moronta, Francisco I. Valero Neumann, Richard C. Nicola, Rafael de

1999

Nowordworski, Valerian Nozawa, Tetsu Oliviero, M. Palandra, Nicholas A. Perez, Gonzalo Domingo Pulley, Franklin J. Reis Jr., Marco Aurelio Ridge, Mark L. Roby, Kevin R. Rowlands, Peter Rubschlager, Jens Schlatter, Rudolf Schulte, Rolf Scoones, Peter Sellick, Meather Lynne Shinomiya, Akihiko Stearns, Watt A. Stiver, Shawn Sturgeon, Stephen Suda, Shinsuke

Tagert, Dave Taylor, Scott Tegner, Mia Jean Tichy, Walther Tyler, Charles M. Vanik, Steve Wachholz, Chris Wiesner, Louise Wiley, Anthony Yanai, Tetsuichi

1998

Alber, Peter Aleschewski, Klaus Atala, Ingalill Baek, Woon Suns Bailff, Roger W. Bengert, Charles A. Beaty, Jerry Belcher, Andry Bibeau, Andre R. Bozanic, Jeffrey Broner, Jean-Marc Campbell, Tom Carter, Peter Cavallo, Rene Chang, Han Chang, She Myung Chapon, Łric Chiew, Jerry Yip Kai

Chofre, Ruth Mary
Cox, Larry J.
Bay, Stephen William (Bil)
Be Corolis, Gilhert
Demmel, Johann Wener
Droste, Thomas
Ettien, Francis Keith
Falkeborn, Christer
Fertig, Alexander Gerhard
Fischer, Harry E.
Florian, Dieter
Lentrer, Robert
Geriss, Joe
Gilliam, Bret
Goomes, Nuno
Good, Fred
Goodall, Paul
Green, Kevin

Guimbard, Bruno
Hadjinicolaou, Panos
Haleem, Mohamed
Harding, John H.
Herm, Wolfgang
Hernandez, Ricardo
Hills, Steve
Hof, Reinhard James
Huntington, Earle Dene
Hussain, Musthag
Ibsen, Keith
Indert, Francis
Jackson, David R.
Jarsmo, Bo
Jones, Burt
Juris, Luca E.
Klein Jr., Jordan
Knight, David

Kohut, Linda Kornetari Masaberu, Masaberu Kon, Masao Korger, Armin Kozmik, Jim Kuehnel, Bernd Mac Kursch, Wolfgang Langtry, Glenn Lan, Hardy Lennmark, Inge Manik, Hassan Marouez, Sergio Marouez, Sergio Mactopaolo, Jose Francisco McNeely, Burton Menkens, Kris Mercier, Daniel Michl, Stefan

Mikhailov, Alexei Mitchell, Simon Montagnon, Jean Pierre Moritz, Burkhard Nelson, Mike Nicholls, Carl Nicoletti, Bruno Nicoletti, Jose Oernhagen, Hans Oliver, Bill Ostergaard, Erik Oylergard, Erik Oylergard, Daniele Pardo, Javier Ibran Pelegrino, Daniele Pistor, Dettef Poüzat, Jean Pierre Potier, Richard Ritzschke, Juergen Rockman, Irvan Ruloff, Gerhard Scapens, Mark Schirfski, Martin Schmitt, Michael Schneider, Robert Senou, Hiroshi Serra, Jorge Perez Shimlock, Maurine Simms, David J. Simons, Jerry Skogland, Paul Strike, David Tachibana, Kunio Talbot, Bob Tateishi, Kazuyoshi Thornley, Chris Tomari, Masahiro Uhre, Jan Unger, Herbert Urbanski, Charles Tim Valenti, Fabio Weckman, Pierre G.Y. Wiget, Monika Willis, Lester E. Wubs, Riet G. P. Yamaguchi, Masaoki Yoshida, Isshin Zedelmayer, Christine Zedelmayer, Josef

1997

Baieri, Stefano Bandini, Angela Bannini, Edgardo Barberini, Maurizio Bello, Juan Cedrone, Danilo Chambers, Norman Charles Christman, Pamela I. Civion. Luciana

Comeau, Gerald F. Cressi, Antonio Cristofori, Roberto D'Angelo, Giulia Davis, Brian W. Dunn, Patrick Elana, Tamer Falangola, Renata Fogel, Fred Gadau, Angelo Ghelia, Maria Gixfoell, Girseppe Massimo Hae, Song Shing Herlambang, Loky Homma, Koichi Hoogesteyn, Ron Hoon, An Jung Jackson, Sam Johnson, Ed Ki, Lim Sung Macaluso, Angela Maiorca, Enzo Maiorca, Rossana Makula, Stefano McAllister, Raymond F. Mertens, Lawrence E. Mester, Robert T. Micheletti, Casimiro Minne, Steven Morales, Adolfo Murata, Yukio Nakazono, Akinobu Nicklin, Terry Nottenius, Everardo Oppenheim, Claude Pedersen, Vernon Peng, Lim Hua Rey, Jorge Schecker, Felipe Schiller, Raffella Scianna, Mario Seruntine, Donald P. Shafshak, Ashraf Shearer, Gordon Slater, Richard Allan Stewart, John Stocks, T. Wings Vives, Jaime Watanabe, Hiroyuki Wilson, Greg Yamasaki, Sumihiro Yurek, Allen L. Zocca, Roberto

1996

Adler, Paul
Akama, Norio
Akama, Norio
Antoine, Claude
Assl, Wolfgang
Beard, Nadine K.
Beard, William V.
Beretta, Gianduca
Bieser, Janet
Blair, Malcolm
Bertterklieber, Frust
Bugg, Stan
Bugowicz, Alecsi
Campoli, Bernie
Cangini, Claudio
Cervelin, Lorenzo
Cheol, Lee Sun
Chull, Hwang

Clemencia, Alvin
Clymire, Terry G.
Colassanti, Arduino
Collings, Peter
Corbett, Demis
Cozzi, Giovanni
Dieppa, Jose
Domacasse, Johan Jopie
Brafahl, Jack
Dworak, Johan
Ferragud, Vicente J. Toldra
Fraci, Berbert
Fritzsche, Leenora
Fucks, Diebmar
Galletta, Phil

Galletti, Federico
Garvin, Hank
Gallman, Ronald L.
Glovannucci, Massimo
Gomez, Rene
Hagemann, Dieter
Hak, Kim Chong
Hayashi, Masayoshi
Hess, Roger
Heusler, Eddi
Hoffman, George M.
Hubley, Dohn D.
Humberg, Bernd
Hagaki, Yusuke
Johnson, Bob
Junghauer, Georg
Kaitz, Philipp
Kelly, Jain

Kimbell, Joseph Kono, Yuichi Kromp, Thomas Kruger, Gene T. Kude, Masao Lachenmeyer, John Lane, Herbert Edward Lehman, Jeannine Lehman, Jeannine Lehman, Jeannine Lehtenderg, Dietmar Luttenberger, Frauz Mano, Yoshihiro Mansfield, Robert Margarita, Maxima Masuda, Hajime McDonnell, Kevin McMeekin, Michael Meditsch, Ing, Franz Meditsch, Ing, Franz Merritt, Brian Myahira, Hideyasu Moran, Dave Mueller, Dieter Muirhead, Duncan R. Nagata, Masakazu Nakamura, Tsuneo Neumann, Guenter Niinuma, Yoxhitaka Orac, Norbert Papalardo, Angelo Paz, Jose Albino Changa Peltzari, Mensandro Pertsico, Frank Pettarin, Alessandro Pelt, Yoon Sang Prasad, Deo Jay Prinz, Bernhard Reilly, Jim Rile Reschl, Hans Richards, Kelvin Riedl, Prof. Rupert Riegel, Ingo Robinson, Julie R. Roetby, Ing. Gerhard Rosenberg, Steve Ryuzaki, Hiddo Scheier, Werner Scott, Chris Sembenotti, Albert Silvanticin, Joe

Soccol, Antonio Strykowski, Joe Stueber, Prof. Ederhard Studa, Robert Charles Takakjian, Eric J. Thode, Arnol Todisco, Len Truitt, Harry Turla, Tino Van Laak, U. Vargas, Mario Vasquez, Turiano Vasquez, Turiano Vatt, James D. Young, Kim In Zumrick, John L.

1995

Allberry, Kathy
Altkorn, Benjamin
Anthony, John
Anthone, Victor J.
Arai, Akio
Arakawa, Kirouki
Bakat, Stewart Roy
Baldi, Piero
Ballard, Bryan
Bati, Api
Benda, Hilmar
Bennett, Steven F.
Biles, John
Binanzer, Waltraut
Blattmann, Gerd
Bloye, Donald L.
Bohn, Hans-Joerg
Bounting, Frank
Brandt, Jim
Bratcher Critchlow, Twila
Brooks, Ernest II
Buchanan, Dan
Bucher, Rämondo
Bunch, Dare

Caccetta, Eucenio
Cafiero, Gaetano
Cafiero, Gaetano
Christman, Paul
Clark, Mary Ann
Cobb, Andy
Colin, Patrick L.
Cooksey Sr., William C.
Cooper, William C.
Cooter, Gary
Cove, Michelle K.
Cowie, R. Don
Crockett Ill, Edward S.
Cruse, Kenneth
Cummins, Mancy
Curtis, Michael D.
Cuttler, Gro
Davidson, Peter
Davies, John F.
Davis, Walter
De Groot, Russell
De Vita, Vincenzo
Dick, Jack

Diger, Max
Domacasse, Ebo
Drogin, Steve
Edwards, Petrus
Eletti, Marco
Engstler, Tyrid
Estabrook, James R.
Ferreras, Francisco Pipin
Finch, Bil
Heetham, Jennifer
Forman, Sylvin
Franklin, Alfred A.
Freeman, Gerald S.
Fricke, Hans
Funkhouser, Lynn
Ghisotti, Andrea
Gilbert, Dowrn D.
Gohar, Hamed
Grimm, Bob
Gruetzediek, Maike
Grundmann, Bernd
Grzelka, Ron C.
Guglielmi, Alfrede
Haber, Mike

Harrigan, William Harrison, Richard V. Hartman, Robert A. Hiner, Eric Hitchens, Noel Holzapfel, Rudolf Iffert, Heinz Innen, Francis Isbel, Ron Ito, Katsutoshi Jardine, Clare Jeane, Grover Scott Jones, A. Jose Joyeux, Vitus Kafer, Charles Chaz Karmel, Leonardo Kasai, Masao Keefe, Nowdla Keene, Robert Alec Kita, Yoshitane Klein, Bob Klein, Leo Liburdi, Joseph Lindemann, Mary

Longman, Bruce
Lovel, Andrew
Lowe, Leroy
MacKay, C.L.
MacKeal, Russ
McClain, Leslie
McKinney, Gavin
McKinnon, Ian
McLaughlin, Big John
McMillan, Tom
Miller, Mark
Mitchell, Charles T.
Mochizuki, Akinobu
Muchanski, Eugene
Muzzinger, Paul
Nand, Yogesh
Nickin, Charles Rhilip (Flip)
Noel, Julian
O'Hanlon, John
Okada, Masaharu
Orzech, James
Palmer, Kevin
Palmere, Frank

Pannier, Roger
Pastorino, Juergen
Pastorino, Juergen
Pawelek, Wayne
Perez, Juan Bravo
Pettennude Fh.D., Paul E.
Pratt, Stan
Prodoehl, Lawrence
Pulley, Dennis M.
Rafols, Jose E.
Reither, Joshen
Reith, Klaus
Reith, Klaus
Reith, Renate
Reseck, John
Reyner, Mark H.
Riefenstahl, Leni
Ripa, Arnold
Ritter, John
Robinson, Sue
Roeglin, Petra
Royer, Charles
Rudolph, Arimichy
Rudolph, Michioshy

Ryan, Jack
Santee, Don
Scarpath, Massimo
Schneider, Frank
Schweinter, Doc
Seeger, Gerhard E.
Seeman, Karl Guenther
Sistrunk, Michele
Spencer, Mark J.
Steene, Roger
Stevens, Donald
Stich, P. Joseph
Storm, Michael Craig
Sutton, Laura
Suzuki, Katsumi
Suzuki, Yasuo
Suzuki, Katsumi
Suzuki, Yasuo
Swann, Chris
Tamanivalu, A. Valu
Temple, Robert C.
Thomas, Ben
Thomas, Gene
Thompson, Susan
Tiedemann, Edwin

SSI'S PLATINUM PRO DIVERS

1995 (con't)

1994

Umberger, Rene Urban, Reinhard Urevitch, Joseph

Usui, Shoji Van Blaricum, Michael R Vollmer, Ingo Wagner, Dan Wall, Susan Schmidt Washio, Koichiro Weller, Robert Frogfoot Wiggins, Julius Jr. Windsor, David Winter, Roger Wong, Michael Patrick Wood, Karen Wright, Steve Yano, Korechika Yoshino, Yusuke Zauner, Gerhard

Aaron, Jack
Acuff, Shelley
Aguilar, Fernando
Aisek, Kimiuo
Allen, Tom
Arevalo, Sebastian F.
Averill, Harry
Baier, Kurt
Baldi, John E.
Bauer, Heinz
Beach, Jerry A.
Bennett, Richard
Binanzer, Gerhard
Binanzer, Genhard
Binanzer, Gerhard
Brond, Michael
Brandt, Ronald
Brassil, Maura
Buckley, John
Burgess, Robert
Burnosky, Gerald
Byron, Tom
Cameron, James
Cappelletti, Enrico
Caputo, Paul
Carew, Rod

Cawsey, John (Ralph)
Chesser Ph.D., Richard
Christini, Edward
Christini, Edward
Cinelli, Francesco
Clark, John Scott
Claudio, Zanini
Colantoni, Paolo
Craddock, Gary T.
Darkin, Valeri B.
Deacon, Kevin
Deacs, Jane Agnes
Deas, Walter
Diller, Urs
Doermbach, Barbara
Donahue, Peter M.
Dorsey, Joe
Duff, J.D.
Duuzelman, Thomas J.
Ehn, med. 0.F.
Eibl-Eibesfeld, Prof.
Elibi, Marvin
Ehvyn, Harold M.
Erhard, Bobby
Fead, Louis McPherson
Feldman, Philip
Ferrantino, Claudio
Ferrertii, Katherine D.
Ferrirol, Laime
Filippetti, Carlo (Godfather)

Fisher, Melvin A.
Flahan, Mark
Fletcher, Homer Follmer, Joanie
Freiding, Arthur
Freiding, Arthur
Gadhois, John Reed
Galster, Rene
Garofalo, Gianni
Gibert, Frank B.
Gilchrist, Colleen
Gilchrist, Colleen
Gilchrist, Colleen
Gregor, Deborah K.
Gregor, George F.
Griffiths, John
Guggenbuehl, Walti
Hagemann, Thomas
Hahn, Max
Hanson, David
Harrison, Michele
Hass, Hans
Hass, Lotte
Haux, Gerhard
Heese, Edgar
Henderson, Phil
Hove, Carl W.
Howe, Gary
Howe, Gary
Howe, Gary
Howe, Gary

Jameson, Bruce
Jarrett, Alan
Jaskulski, Thomas A.
Kayle, Allan
King, Jennifer
Kingstad, Jeff
Kingstad, Jeff
Krassoff, David K.
Kristof, Emory
Kross, George
Krueger, Manfred
Kubu, Masaaki
Kwee, Coh Kim
LaPenta, John
LaRochelle, Ed
Lesser, Richard A.
Lexau, Christine
Lippman, John
Lipson, Regenald Charles
Lissauer M.D., Wernet
Livermon, Robert Cartlon
Lorenzo, Feix
Luff, Mel
Lyons, Robert
Maiorca, Exo
Makishi, Muneyasu
Marlijn, Leonel
McKenney, John

McKenzie, Col
McLaughin, Mark
McNally, Jim
Means, Tim
Metzger, Dennis
Miller, Den, Samuel
Miller, De., Samuel
Miller, Jensel
Miller, Jensel
Moore, Michael H.
Morrison, Donald
Moore, Michael H.
Morrison, Donald
Moryer, Joh
Murrieta, Jose Luis Pepe
Nachoum, Amos
Naglschmid, F.
Nakamura, Koji
Ng, Terry
Nicosia, Bobbie
Nieto, Lesar Corazza
Notarbartolo, Paolo
Novelo, Antonio
O'Rourke, John
Olischia, Vouji
Olischia, Alessandro
Olischia, Takero
Ozaki, Koji
Paerson, Bob

Pearson, Jim Wade
Pepoli, Umberto
Pepper, Alan
Perello, Juan Ivas
Picchetti, Guido
Plate, Herbert
Pough, Chip
Prian, Gregory
Quilici, Folco
Radzey, Udo
Rebikoff, Dimitri
Rechnitzer, Andreas
Rega, Harry
Regensberger, Armin
Riddell, Greg
Rosman, Paul
Rouleau, Roger
Rosman, Paul
Rouleau, Roger
Rosman, Paul
Rouleau, Roger
Rosman, Paul
Rouleau, Roger
Rosman, Weinz
Sanchez, Momo
Sarro, William
Schmeider, Udo
Sanchez, Momo
Sarro, William
Schmeider, Udo
Stella, Joe
Stella, Joe
Stella, Joe

Stewart, Richard
Taguchi, Tetsu
Takano, Goro
Takashima, Atsushi
Takeuchi, Hiroshi
Tadesihi, Akira
Taylor, Colin
Tegeler, Rick
Tessche, Sigurt
Tetsu, Yoshimatsu
Uditis, J. Edward
Uriarte, Javier
Wallin, Jil
Wallin, Karl
Ward, Michael
Washington, Patrick
Weeks-Guarino, Janette
Weinstein, Skip
Welmink, Harry
Whitaker, Richard
Williams, Jim
Wiseman, Jeannie
Wood, Michael
Wood, Michael
Wood, Michael
Wood, Michael

Stewart, James

1993

Abbott, James F.
Acker, Bill
Adkison, Gary J.
Albury, Barry
Allen, Gerald R.
Amidon, Walter L.
Amidon, Malter L.
Anderson, Dick
Annan, Les
Appliegate, Renne Steven
Arceo, Carlos Ariel Mena
Armeson, Charlie
Auerbach, Paul S.
Avila, Miguel A.
Ball, Mike
Baskin, Fua Cope
Baskin, Alam M.
Baskin, Fua Cope
Baskin, Alam M.
Baskin, Fua Cope
Bechman, Denis E.
Belmare, Richard E.
Beaty, Judy
Beckmann, Denis E.
Belmare, Richard P.
Bennett, Dave
Bernett, D

Cataltumo, Al
Chalk, Jack
Christian, Erwin
Chung, Derek
Church, Cathy
Church, Jim
Clark, Eugenie
Clark, Lugenie
Clark, Lugenie
Clark, Lugenie
Clark, Lugenie
Clark, Lugenie
Clark, Loe M.
Cole, William E.
Coleman, FAIPP, Neville
Collins, F. Bart
Cousteau, Jacques
Collega, Jacques
Cousteau, Jacques
Collega, Jacques
Cousteau, Jacques
Collega, Jacques
Cousteau, Jacques
Collega, Jacques
Collega, Jacques
Cousteau, Jacques
Collega, Jacques
Cousteau, Jacques
Collega, Jacques
Cousteau, Jacques
Cousteau, Jacques
Cousteau,

Fonseca, Randal Fontes, Tory W. Ford, Suzame F. Forman, Allan Foster, Robert Don Fouke, Thomas Fox, Jef Fox, Rodney Freeman, Roger S. Frehsee, Rick French, Nancy Ackerman French, Robert H. Frier, Scott C. Friese, Joerg Frink, Stephen Frueh, Don Gabr Aly, Hesham Gaffmey, John Galindo, Julio Gallagher, Richard O. Galagher, Michael Gregor, Jean Grahm, Chineina K. Grawer, Dennis Greenberg, Michael Gregor, Jean Greenberg, Michael Gregor, Jean Greenberg, Michael Gregor, Jean Greenberg, Michael Gregor, Jean Hallenbeck, Jere Hallender, Jon Hardy, Ronald Hardy, Ronald Hardy, Sonald Har

Higgs, E. Lance High, William Hillier, Michael
Holland, Ron
Holland, Ron
Holland, Ron
Holland, Ron
Holland, Robert
Holme, Mike
Holston, Bob
Holub, T.J.
Howland, Garrald
Huck, Mark Moke
Hughes, Peter
Humann, Paul
Loorn, Nick
Ingham, Cecil
Inglis, Wayne Ronald
Imman, Dave
Jacques, Joey
Jacques, Joey
James, Jacqueline
James, Jacqueline
James, Jacqueline
James, Jacqueline
James, Jan Hoynacki
Jansen, Jeremy L.
Jardine, Alan
Jetmore, Danny T.
Johnson, Richard
Johnston, Gregory
Joiner, Jim
Jordan, Julie
Keatts, Henry
Keefe, Bil
Kerflier, Gary R.
Reough, Tom
Kerstitch, Alex
Kilbride, Gary T.
Kilbride, Gary T.
Kilbride, Gary R.
Reough, Tom
Kerstitch, Alex
Kilbride, Gary T.
Laver C.
Kilbride, Gary T.
Kilbride, Gary T.
Kilbride, Gary T.
Laver C.

Lipman, Ronald M.
Littlehales, Bates
Livers, J. Gale
Loyst, Ken
Lucas, Steve
Lyvere, Douglas L.
Mackay, Gregory
Marx, Robert F.
Matthews, Charles H.
McAniff, John J.
McCallum, Graham Murray
McCoy, Chris
McDermot, Winston
McDowall, Rod
McLaughlin, Donna L.
McManus, Jinn
McMillian, John G.
McHaal, Rich
Mesterel, Bob
Mena, Alvaro 'Blondie'
Mercer Sr., Robert T.
Merker, Ron
Merren, Gregory
Mercher, Gregory
Mesgleski, Mike
Misburn, Peter J.P.
Mithurn, Peter J.P.
Mithcell, Lisa Ann
Mockler, Paul
Molina, Martin G.
Monterroso, Constantino
Morgan, Ber
Morgan, Ela Jean
Mount, Tom
Murphy, Geri

Pecel, Brad
Perera, Martin Aguilar
Perrine, Doug
Perryman, Derek
Peterson, Pete
Peterson, Peter
Peterson, Peterson, Peter
Peterson, Peterson, Peterson, Peter
Peterson, Peterson,

Stewart, James
Stone, Jay
Storheil, Freddy
Storheil, Freddy
Stotheil, Freddy
Stotheil, Freddy
Stotheil, Freddy
Stotheil, Freddy
Stotheil, Freddy
Stotheil, Freddy
Jakes, Jaylor, Chris
Laylor, Chris
Laylor, Chris
Laylor, Ron
Taylor, Valerie
Feather, Robert G.
Teitel, Pamela A.
Tillman, Al
Tillman, Al
Timmerman, Tom
Tomari, Hiroshi
Torbitong, Francis
Tozer, Colin J.
Travers, Arthur
Tucker, Teddy
Turcotte, LeGrand (Lee)
Tyger, William A.
Tzimodis, Faul
Valentine, Tyrone P.
Valenzuela, Mario
Van Raden, Charles Leonard
Van Rasel, Charles Edward
Vizcaino, Sergio Sandoval
Vogel, Joe E.
Wagenseller II, Paul W.
Wakeham, Charles
Wall, John
Ward, Harry
Waterman, Stanton A.
Watson, Neal
Watts, Hal
Wederfoort, Eric Berhard
White, Dee
Whiteland, Arthur
Wight, Jeffrey R.
Williams, Raymond Keith
Wills, Jabe
Wiseman, Clay H.
Yashix, Koji
Young, James E.
Young, Michael A.
Zammotk, Allen A. Jr.
Ziebell, Alby







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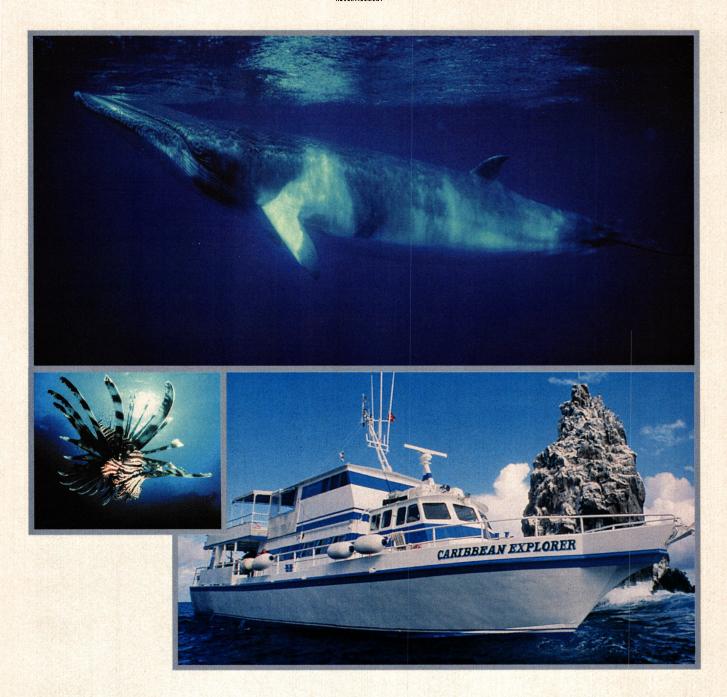
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Since 1987, Explorer Ventures has been bringing value to the live-aboard experience and has been rated over and over again among the top contenders in customer service. The Explorer Ventures vessels ply the waters of two of the world's most exciting dive regions. In the Western hemisphere, the Caribbean Explorer takes guests to the hot spots of the northeastern Caribbean offering a blend of Dutch, French and British cultures. In the land down under. the Nimrod Explorer visits one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World and the world's largest living organism, the Great Barrier Reef.

The Caribbean Explorer is a 100-foot vessel custom-designed for live-aboard diving. The list of amenities includes air conditioning. TV, VCR, E6 film processing, a full-size dive deck with plenty of gear storage, a camera table, and freshwater showers. A water-level dive platform ensures your comfort as you prepare to dive. When it's time to relax between dives, there's a sun deck topside with plenty of lounge and arm chairs. There's even an open-air salon, equipped with a stereo, VCR and fully-stocked wet bar. The Caribbean Explorer has ranked in the top ten in several categories worldwide in Rodale's Readers' Choice Awards for the last six years straight, including best service and best food, among others.

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of the Saba Marine Park where you'll enjoy outstanding deep water pinnacles and rarely visited walls. You'll visit the Statia Marine Park and then continue on to dive St. Kitts. There's an opportunity to do five dives daily including a night dive every night. At each island destination, a tour is offered so there's plenty of opportunity to visit the islands and explore your destinations both topside and underwater. These tours are optional so those who can't get enough diving can stay behind and get wet.

The *Nimrod Explorer* is a 70-foot power catamaran that started as a private yacht and was later converted to accommodate 18 liveaboard passengers. The layout is slightly different from the *Caribbean Explorer* but the amenities are very similar. Depending which leg of the trip you find yourself on, your journey will either

start or end with a scenic low-level flight on a small passenger plane over the Great Barrier Reef. Your dive adventure takes place between Cairns and Lizard Island far beyond where any day boats reach, and into the Ribbon Reefs, some of the most pristine diving areas of Queensland. Exploratory trips are also scheduled to the far northern Great Barrier Reef toward Papua New Guinea or into the Coral Sea. You can make Cairns the epicenter for additional topside exploration such as a trip into a world heritage rain forest or deep into the desolate Outback. No trip to Australia is complete without some serious topside sightseeing and exploration.

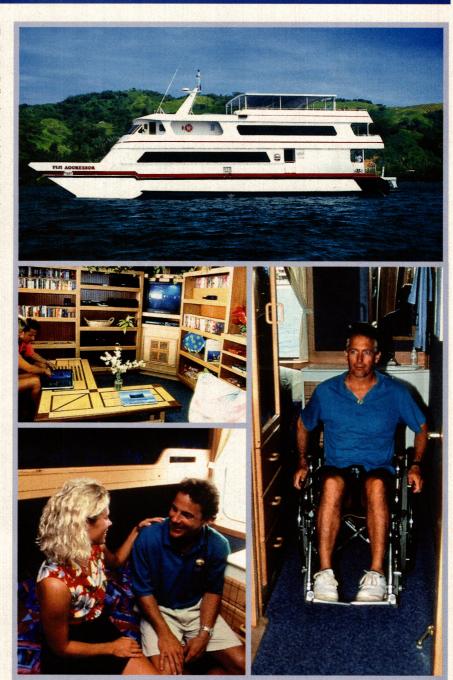
With one of the best values in live-aboard diving and a choice between two of the world's hottest dive destinations, you can't go wrong with Explorer Ventures.

Fiji Aggressor The coup is thru

News of last year's political unrest in Fiji didn't stop dedicated travelers from enjoying one of the world's hottest dive destinations. In fact, the Fiji Aggressor didn't miss a single charter following the May 19, 2000 seizure of Fiji's parliament. Divers traveled uneventfully throughout the year and rave reviews continued to pour in. "We came back from Fiji last week. Our week on the Aggressor was not that good... it was FANTASTIC! Great crew, beautiful diving and some treats. Near Wakaya, we went for a swim with... PILOT WHALES! Never expected such a treat in Fiji." An entry from Captain Sean's log reads, "The dives here were done mostly on walls where the divers were treated to blue-ribbon eels, lionfish by the dozen, and a reef alive with color and fish. All this on the first dive. The next few dives brought manta rays, hammerhead sharks, and schools of barracuda."

The brief coup in Fiji is over, travel is safe, and Fiji's underwater world continues to be one of the most beautiful dive destinations in the world. And 2001 might be just the time to get the best deal in dive travel to a true world-class destination. The Aggressor Fleet has just announced its "The Coup is Thru" special that will last throughout the entire year, taking \$400 off all Fiji charters in 2001.

The Fiji Aggressor is a 106-foot power catamaran with a wide beam of 30 feet, making for what professional cinematographer Stan Waterman calls "fat city afloat." There are eight double staterooms each with private bath and individually controlled air-conditioning. The boat features an E6 lab, nitrox, and wheelchair accessibility including a wheelchair elevator. The Fiji Aggressor received a five-star rating from the handicapped scuba association.



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Nekton Pilot the world's most unique live-aboard dive ves sel

Looking more like an offshore resort "platform" than a liveaboard dive vessel, the *Nekton Pilot* seems to have sprung to life directly from the pages of *Popular Mechanics* magazine. The SWATH design incorporates twin supporting pontoons that remain completely submerged where the ocean's waves have little effect. Four struts to the superstructure cut drag dramatically while underway.

Nekton's innovative design has many benefits for its guests. At first glance, the massive beam obviously creates a great deal more room. The engines are tucked inside the pontoons below water level to minimize noise and vibration. Most important is the smooth ride and minimal wave response from the hulls, meaning even those who are susceptible to motion sickness will be very comfortable on this boat.

The *Nekton Pilot* has 16 spacious cabins each with its own head and shower, a large picture window, and independently controlled air-conditioning. For photographers there are video editing facilities, E6 processing, large carpeted camera tables, dedicated equipment rinse tanks, and viewing light tables in the lounge. Up top there's a huge 2000-square-foot sun deck with lounge chairs, a shaded area and a Jacuzzi hot tub.

From May through October, you can choose from two Bahama itineraries leaving from Fort Lauderdale. During November through April, the *Nekton Pilot* dives Belize. Under construction as you read this is the newest Nekton, the *Nekton Rorqual*. The *Rorqual* is scheduled to launch in the summer of 2001 and will allow year-round scheduling between the two dive destinations.



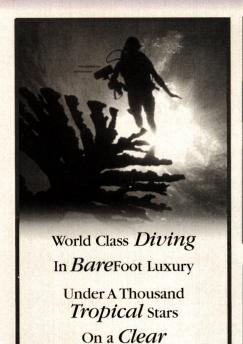
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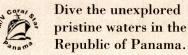
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N. LITTLE ROCK	Rick's Dive'n & Travel Center	(501) 753-6004	DENVER	MammerHeads	(303) 499-8500	PANAMA CITY	Panama City Dive	(850) 235-3390
SEARCY	Searcy Dive Center	(501) 279-7171	ENGLEWOOD	A-1 Scuba Center	(303) 789-2450	PANAMA CITY	Panama City Dive Club	(850) 234-8963
BRITISH COL	UMBIA, CANADA		ENGLEWOOD	Underwater Phantasea South	(303) 220-8282	PANAMA CITY BEACH	Divers Den	(850) 234-8717
CAMPBELL RIVER		(604) 287-7652	FT. COLLINS	High Plain Scuba	(970) 493-8562	PANAMA CITY BEACH	Diver's Outlet	(305) 451-0819
GABRIOLA	Gabriola Reefs Dive Shop	(250) 247-8443	GREELEY	High Plain Scuba	(970) 353-3337	PENSACOLA	Aquatic Parrotheads	(850) 476-0115
KIMBERLY	The Kimberly Book	(250) 427-7337	LITTLETON	Fantasy Scuba Inc.	(303) 220-0797	PENSACOLA	MammerHeads	(850) 712-3589
LANGLEY	The Diving Locker Good Diving & Kay	(604) 514-8190 (604) 483-3223	PUEBLO STEAMBOAT SPRI	Colorado Gypsy Divers NGS Steamboat Scuba & Watersp	ports	PINELLAS PARK PINELLAS PARK	Bill Jackson Inc.	(813) 577-6378
NORTH VANCOUV		(604) 983-2232	OTENINE OF THE	TOO Steamboat Scuba & Waters	(970) 870-8175	PINELLAS PARK	F.H.A.T. Divers Tackle Shack Water	(727) 424-7189 (727) 546-5080
NEW WESTMINST		(604) 524-1188	WHEAT RIDGE	Scuba Den		POMPANO BEACH	Apres Plongee Dive Club	(954) 776-4097
PENTICTION	North American Dive Shop	(604) 770-1022	CONNECTICUT			POMPANO BEACH	Lighthouse Dive Center	(305) 782-1100
PORT ALBERNI	Octopus Adventure	(250) 723-3057	BROOKFIELD	Newtown U/W Search & Rescue	(203) 744-1440	PONCE DE LEON	Vortex Spring Inc.	(904) 836-4979
PORT COQUITLAN		(604) 942-4838	BROOKFIELD	Pan Aqua's Diving	(203) 775-3573	PORT SALERNO	Sandbar Dive Club	(561) 746-0817
SALMON ARM	Copper Island Diving	(604) 832-4849	BROOKFIELD	The Dive Shop	(203) 740-9166	RIVIERA BEACH	Seapro Scuba Center	(407) 844-3483
SQUAMISH	Sea to Sky Ocean	(604) 892-3366	DANBURY	What's Going Down Divers	(203) 325-3272	ST. PETERSBURG	Aquatic Obsession	(813) 344-DIVE
VANCOUVER VANCOUVER	Oceaner Sporting	(604) 732-1344	HARTFORD HARTFORD	The Innerspace Explorers	(860) 583-4529	STUART	Deep Six Watersports	(561) 288-3999
VANCOUVER	Rowands Reef Dive The Diving Locker	(604) 669-3483 (604) 736-2681	MONTVILLE	The Gillmen SECONN Skin Divers	(860) 583-4529	STUART	Island Hobbies-N-Stuff	(561) 221-8100
VANCOUVER	U/W BC Photographic Society	(604) 736-7999	MONTVILLE	Southeastern CT Skindivers Inc.	(203) 235-9475 (860) 666-7713	TALLAHASSEE TAMPA	Club Aquatics	(850) 893-8752
VICTORIA	Ocean Centre	(250) 475-2202	NORWALK	Rex Dive Center	(203) 866-5555	TAMPA	Depth Perception Super Bikes	(813) 689-3483 (813) 910-2453
VICTORIA	Ogden Point Dive	(250) 380-9119	QUAKER HILL	Seaview Scuba	(860) 442-7279	TAVERNIER	Florida Keys Dive	(305) 852-4599
CALIFORNIA			VERNON	New England Ski & Scuba	(203) 872-0113	VERO BEACH	Deep Six Dive Shop	(561) 562-2883
AUBURN	High Sierra Diver	(916) 823-6757	WEST HAVEN	Underwater Swimmer	(203) 932-0258	WILLISTON	Blue Grotto Dive	(352) 528-5770
AVALON	Catalina Scuba	(310) 510-2350	DELAWARE			GEORGIA		
BEVERLY HILLS	Reef Seekers Dive	(310) 652-4990	HONITON	Oceanic (SW) LTD.			Club (Just Add Water Scuba)	(912) 483-0960
CONCORD	Dive & Board	(510) 689-6969		Delaware Underwater Swim Club	(302) 234-3060	ATHENS	Dolphin Dive Center	(706) 548-3483
COSTA MESA CRESCENT CITY	Bottom Time Scuba Pacific Quest Diving	(714) 968-6047	WILMINGTON DISTRICT OF	Poseidon Adventures	(302) 656-2326	ATLANTA	Aquatic Adventure	(404) 728-1103
CYPRESS	Scuba Toys	(707) 464-8753 (714) 527-0430	D.C.	National Diving Center	(202) 363-6123	ATLANTA ATLANTA	Divers At Sea Inc.	(404) 266-2150
DUBLIN	Captain Aqua's	(510) 490-5597	FLORIDA	Tradional Biving Center	(202) 300-0123	ATLANTA	Divers Connection Diving World, U.S.	(404) 364-9699 (404) 634-4354
ELK GROVE	Elk Grove Diving	(916) 686-1122	BIG PINE KEY	Underseas Inc.	(305) 872-2700	ATLANTA	MammerHeads	(404) 634-4354
FOLSOM	Diver's Cove	(916) 984-6185	BRADENTON	Sea Trek Divers	(941) 779-1506	COLQUITT	Dive For Less	(912) 758-9515
FRESNO	Blue Water Ocean Sports		CASSELBERRY	Scuba Diversions	(407) 332-1222	COLUMBUS	HammerHeads	(706) 571-9222
HANFORD	Dive Right In	(209) 582-8102	CLEARWATER	Mac's Sports Inc.	(813) 442-9931	FAYETTEVILLE	Peachtree Dive Center	(404) 487-6609
HUNTINGTON BE		(714) 375-0595	CRYSTAL RIVER	American Pro Dive	(904) 563-0041	GRIFFIN	Scuba John's Dive	(404) 766-1186
HUNTINGTON BE		(714) 379-3830	CRYSTAL RIVER	B.C. Buddies Dive Club	(352) 344-5520	LA GRANGE	La Grange Dive Center	(706) 812-9011
HUNTINGTON BEA		(714) 375-5471	CRYSTAL RIVER	Crystal Lodge Diving	(904) 795-6798	ROME	Rome Scuba Association	(770) 748-4016
LOS ANGELES	H2OHMS High Voltage Divers HammerHeads	(818) 372-6922 (562) 923-9401	CRYSTAL RIVER DAYTONA BEACH	Port Paradise Discover Diving	(904) 795-3111	SAVANNAH SAVANNAH	Diving Locker & Ski Chalet	(912) 927-6603
	Angeles Black U/W Explorers (LAB		DELAND	West Volusia Divers	(904) 760-3483 (904) 767-1633	SAVANNAH	Fantasia Scuba Zero Gravity	(912) 961-9711
	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	www.labue.org	DELTONA	Deltona Professional	(904) 532-8080	WATKINSVILLE	U/W Adventures	(912) 920-1155 (706) 310-1249
MARINA DEL REY	Lost Patrol Dive Club		DEERFIELD	Divers Outlet	(407) 354-3644	WATKINSVILLE	Underwater Adventures	(706) 310-1243
			DEERFIELD BEACH	Diver's Outlet	(305) 451-0819	HAWAII	The state of the s	
* Dive clubs are	e in blue. To have your club	listed,	DEERFIELD BEACH		(954) 566-6311	HALEIWA	Northshore Diving	(808) 637-7946
see page 154 fo	or more information.	75 CO	DESTIN	Fantasea Scuba	(904) 837-0732	KAILUA	Aaron's Dive	(808) 262-2333
see page 134 K	or more intermitation.	CONTRACTOR OF THE PARTY OF THE						

dive retailers & dive clubs



KAILUA	Windward Dive Center	(808) 263-2311	DAUPHIN	Dauphin Dolphin Scuba Club	(204) 638-8240			
					(204) 763-4943	ASHLAND	MammerHeads	(603) 968-7197
KAILUA-KONA	Jack's Diving Locker	(808) 329-7585	SHILO	C & L Scuba		KEENE	Underwater Sports	(800) 457-4430
KAILUA-KONA	Kona Reefers Dive Club	(808) 322-2500	WINNIPEG	B & B Scuba	(204) 257-3696	LACONIA	Lakes Region Dive Club	(603) 527-0525
KEAUHOU BAY	A Sea Paradise Scuba	(808) 322-2500	WINNIPEG	Diver's Den MB	(204) 453-6300	NEW JERSEY	Cartos riogion sito olds	(000) 027 0020
KIHEI	Maui Dive Shop	(808) 871-2111	MARYLAND				Karada Dia 8 Tarad	(908) 454-3577
KIHEI	Maui Dreams Dive	(808) 874-5332	ANNAPOLIS	Annapolis Scuba Center	(410) 266-8327	ALPHA	Kunuku Dive & Travel	
KIHEI	Scuba Shack	(808) 875-2889		count Diving and Rescue Club	(410) 931-7502	DEPTFORD	Plant Ocean Divers	(856) 662-0900
						DUNELLEN	New Jersey Divers Association	(908) 810-4527
KOLOA	Sea Sport Divers	(808) 742-9303	COLUMBIA	Columbia Scuba, Inc.	(410) 381-1994	EAST HANOVER	Lakeland Divers	(201) 887-0194
KULA	Ho Daddy's Outdoors	(808) 878-2659	FREDERICK	Brass Anchor Scuba	(301) 663-9363	EATONTOWN	HammerHeads	(732) 542-4095
LAHAINA	Dive Maui	(808) 667-2080	MARION	Let's Go Diving	(410) 957-1233		Atlantic Divers Inc.	
LAHAINA	Lahaina Divers Inc.	(808) 667-7496	MASSACHUSETTS			EGG HARBOR TWP.		(609) 641-7722
LAHAINA	Pacific Dive	(808) 667-5331	BLACKSTONE	Diverdors Dive Club	(401) 766-4682	EWING	Delaware Valley Divers	(609) 723-2080
	I acilic Dive	(808) 007-3331				HOBOKEN	Hoboken Dive Center	(201) 795-DIVE
IDAHO	领用设置和外交运行。		GLOUCESTER	Cape Ann Divers	(978) 281-8082	MAPLE SHADE	Aqua-tech Scuba Center	(609) 482-1996
BOISE	Boise Water Sport	(208) 342-1378	HANOVER	South Shore Skindivers	(781) 829-0050	MERCERVILLE	Scuba Experience	(609) 584-8008
BOISE	Scuba First, Inc.	(208) 323-2809	NORTH WEYMOUTH	South Shore Skindivers	(617) 331-1144	METUCHEN	Metuchen Underwater Divers	(732) 951-9434
IDAHO FALLS	Inland Scuba, Inc.	(208) 529-2636	PITTSFIELD	Action Sports	(413) 499-7205			
TWIN FALLS	Dive Magic	(208) 733-8203	QUINCY	South Shore Neptunes	(617) 484-4204	MORGANVILLE	East Coast Diving	(732) 591-9374
	Dive Magic	(200) 700 0200	SOMERVILLE			NEWARK	Sands, Inc.	(201) 242-5004
ILLINOIS				United Divers Inc.	(617) 666-0410	PENNSAUKEN	Mako Dive Club	(609) 639-3245
AURORA	Below H20 Water Dawgs	(630) 820-2531	SOUTH ATTLEBORO	Scuba Center	(508) 761-5015	PRINCETON	The Marine Explorers Club	(609) 921-6233
CHICAGO	Aquarium Divers Scuba Club		SWANSEA	Underwater Training	(508) 676-0363	PRINCETON	Princeton JCT Scuba Club	(609) 448-JAWS
	ScubaDiving@aq	uariumdivers.com	WAKEFIELD	Northshore Frogmen	(978) 526-1454			
CHICAGO	MammerHeads	(708) 226-1614	WEST SPRINGFIELD	Holyoke Underwater	(413) 737-2300	ROCKAWAY	Elite Divers Inc.	(973) 586-2214
CHICAGO	League of U/W Photographers	(773) 368-3642	WESTFIELD	Wilderness Experience	(413) 569-1287	ROCHELLE PARK	Underwater Sports	(201) 843-3340
				Wilderness Experience	(413) 303-1207	SHIPBOTTOM	L.B.I. Scuba	(609) 494-5599
CHICAGO	Underwater Safaris On Lincoln	(773) 348-3999	MICHIGAN			TOMS RIVER	Ocean Wreck Divers of NJ	(731) 367-8631
CREST HILL	Recreational Scuba	(815) 730-0291	ANN ARBOR	Divers, Inc.	(734) 971-7770	TOMS RIVER	Underwater Discovery	(908) 295-5800
CRYSTAL LAKE	Sea Level Diving	(815) 344-9732	BATTLE CREEK	Sub-Aquatic Sport	(616) 968-8551	TRENTON	Lang's Ski and Scuba	(609) 538-1970
DOWNERS GROVE	Creative Whale	(630) 963-4624	BENTON HARBOR	Wolf's Diver Supply	(616) 926-1068			
EVANSTON	Elmer's Watersports		CADILLAC	Divers Central, Inc.	(616) 876-3484	WICKATUNK	New Jersey Aquanauts	(732) 290-0639
						WOODBINE	Mar-vel Underwater	(609) 962-8719
GLEN ELLYN	Sea Jewels	(630) 469-3483	CALUMET	Narcosis Corner Diving	(906) 337-3156	NEW YORK		
GLENVIEW	D.D. Dive Shop	(847) 657-3483	CLARKSTON	Oakland Otters	(248) 922-9250	ANGOLA	Evans Emergency	(716) 549-3338
HANOVER PARK	Sea Lions Dive Center	(630) 289-1680	COLOMA	Mr. Scuba Inc.	(616) 468-6969	ANGOLA	Point Breeze Dive	(716) 549-3773
LAKE VILLA	Toucan Dive	(847) 356-7826	DETROIT	HammerHeads	(248) 549-0303			
LOVES PARK	Loves Park Scuba	(815) 633-6969	FARMINGTON HILLS	Sea The World Scuba	(248) 478-6400	BATAVIA	D's Dive and Surf	(507) 684-0000
						BEAVER DAMS	S & R Underwater	(607) 936-9242
LYONS	D J's Scuba Locker	(708) 442-4388	FLINT	The Dive Shop Inc.	(810) 732-3960	BOHEMIA	Ocean Rock	(516) 471-9500
MOLINE	Sentry Pool & Diving	(309) 797-9721	GRAND RAPIDS	American Dive Zone	(616) 949-9577	BRONX	City Island Pharmacy	(718) 885-3053
MORTON	Aqua Diving School	(309) 263-0045	GRAND RAPIDS	Moby's Dive Shop	(616) 652-DIVE		Park Slope Wreckers	
NAPERVILLE	Berry Aqua Paradise	(630) 579-1150	JACKSON	Divers Mast	(517) 784-5862	BROOKLYN		(718) 230-0001
NORMAL	Midwest Diving	(309) 452-0222	KALAMAZOO	Dive Site	(616) 323-3700	BROOKLYN	Stingray Divers	(718) 384-1280
						BROOKLYN	Urban Divers	
ORLAND PARK	HammerHeads	(708) 226-1614	LAKE ORION	Diver's Den	(810) 693-9801		urbandiver	s@planetmail.com
ROCKFORD	Forest City Scuba	(815) 398-7119	MILAN	Michigan Adventures	(313) 439-DIVE	GLOVERSVILLE AC	dirondack Aquanautical Society	
SHOREWOOD	Jim's Scuba Shop	(815) 744-7320	MUSKEGON	West Michigan Diving	(231) 733-4200	GROTON	Auburn Skin Divers Assn.	(607) 533-3591
SKOKIE	Scuba Systems	(847) 674-0222	NILES	Great Lakes Diving Center	(616) 683-7169			
VILLA PARK	Underseas Scuba Center	(708) 833-8383	PICKNEY	Exotic Sportz	(313) 878-2000	HENRIETTA	Aquatic Center	(716) 334-1670
						LONG ISLAND	> HammerHeads	
WINTHROP HARBO		(708) 872-9791	PLYMOUTH	Divers, Inc.	(313) 971-7770		A STATE OF THE STA	welcome.to/lidiving
WHEELING	Buccaneers Dive Club	(847) 520-4689	PORT HURON	Dive Inn	(810) 987-6263	LYNBROOK	Broadway Divers	(718) 242-3318
INDIANA			SHELBY TWP.	Great Lakes Dive Center	(810) 254-7670	MAMARONECK	The Dive Locker	(914) 381-5935
BLOOMINGTON	Big Red Diver	(812) 331-1110	ST. CLAIR SHORES	Advanced Aquatics	(810) 779-8777			
BLOOMINGTON	Southern Indiana	(812) 336-2527	TRAVERSE CITY	Scuba North, Inc.	(616) 947-2520	MIDDLETOWN	Middletown Scuba	(914) 343-2858
						NANUET	Scuba Quest Diving	(845) 623-8610
CARMEL	Divers Supply	(317) 848-1320	WARREN	Macomb Scuba Center	(810) 558-9922	NEW CITY	Rockland Aquanauts	(516) 234-4341
ELKHART	Hart City Scuba	(219) 264-3528	WIXOM	American Midwest	(810) 960-6500	NEW PALTZ	Deep Six Underwater	(914) 255-7446
EVANSVILLE	Divers World Inc.	(812) 423-2738	MINNESOTA					
FORT WAYNE	Earth Adventures	(219) 424-1420	BRAINERD	Minnesota School of Diving	(218) 829-5953	NEW PALTZ	TSA Scuba	(914) 255-0845
						NEW YORK CITY	Leisure Pro	(212) 645-1234
FORT WAYNE	MammerHeads	(219) 420-5036	CHANHASSEN	Minnesota Manatees (95		NEW YORK CITY	New York Island Travel	(212) 665-6053
INDIANAPOLIS	Diver's Supply Inc.	(317) 89-SCUBA	DETROIT LAKES	Tri-State Diving	(888) SCUBADU	NEW YORK CITY	Pan Aqua Diving	(212) 736-DIVE
INDIANAPOLIS	Midwest Scuba Center	(317) 872-2522	DULUTH	Innerspace Scuba	(218) 726-1010		CANAL STATE OF THE SECOND	
кокомо	Diving Den	(317) 452-1034	EDEN PRAIRIE	International Diving	(612) 975-1728	NEW YORK CITY	Sea Horse Divers	(212) 517-2055
				MammerHeads	(952) 435-7259	NEW YORK CITY	Village Divers	(212) 780-0879
MUNCIE	Leaird's Underwater	(317) 288-8144	MINNEAPOLIS			NORTH SYRACUSE	Aquatic World	(315) 458-1955
NEW ALBANY	Seaweed Divers	(812) 949-8060	MOORHEAD	Mick's Scuba Inc.	(218) 233-0448	NORTHPORT	North Shore Aquatics	(516) 262-7282
NEW CASTLE	Scuba Tech Dive Shop	(765) 593-0082	ROCHESTER	Minnesota Dive Center	(507) 288-8802	PINE CITY	Crandall's Scuba	(607) 733-6901
NOBLESVILLE	Scuba Quest, Inc.	(317) 773-4837	MISSISSIPPI					
STAR CITY	S & M Scuba	(219) 595-7104	JACKSON	Deep South Scuba	(601) 957-3483	PLATTSBURGH	Mel's Dive Shop	(518) 561-7138
VALPARAISO	The Scuba Tank	(219) 477-4454	CATCHER PROPERTY OF THE PERSON OF THE PARTY	2 Amigos Dive Adventure Club	(228) 388-1212	PORT CHESTER	Byram Bay Sports	
TOUR	THE SCUDA TANK	(213) 4/1-4434	MICCOLLET	- Alligos Dive Advertible Cido	(220, 300-1212	REGO PARK	Sea Horse Divers	(718) 897-2885
IOWA			MISSOURI			RIVERHEAD	Peconic Scuba	(516) 727-7578
BURLINGTON	Aqua Sport, Inc.	(319) 754-1734	BRIDGETON	West End Diving	(314) 731-5003	ROCHESTER		(315) 589-8386
MASON CITY	Skin & Scuba Dive	(515) 423-1224	CAPE GIRARDEAU	Academy of Scuba	(573) 335-0756	ROCKY POINT	Meeblyers HammerHeads	(516) 744-7707
W. DES MOINES	Iowa State Skin Divers	(515) 222-DIVE	INDEPENDENCE	Skin N Scuba Dive	(816) 358-0855			
KANSAS			MANCHESTER	Inner World Diving	(314) 391-0005	ROME	Delta Divers	(315) 337-4320
	LIGON Courbo Olich	(705) 040 5070		Storms Diving	(660) 562-6541	RYE	The Scuba Sports Club	
LAWRENCE	H2Oz Scuba Club	(785) 842-5972	MARYVILLE				TSSC@B	eneathTheSea.org
LAWRENCE	Mask-Snorkel-Fin	(785) 749-0500	ORONOGO	Captain John's	(417) 673-2724	SYRACUSE	National Aquatic	(315) 479-5544
MERRIAM	The Dive Shop	(913) 677-3483	SPRINGFIELD	Woodside Surplus	(417) 882-5313	SYRACUSE	The Dive Shop Inc.	(315) 487-7558
WICHITA	Adventure Sports	(316) 689-8051	ST. LOUIS	Scuba Shop USA	(314) 808-3483			
WICHITA	Doo Dah Divers	(316) 941-3635	MONTANA			VESTAL	All About Scuba	(607) 786-3941
	Doo Dan Divers	(210) 241-2023		Advanture Court	(406) 250 7202	WILLIAMSON	Sea to Sea Diving	(315) 589-8373
KENTUCKY		(050) 222	BILLINGS	Adventure Scuba	(406) 259-7363	NORTH CAROLI	NA	
FLORENCE	The Scuba Shack	(859) 283-1550	GREAT FALLS	Electric City Dive Club		BEAUFORT	Discovery Diving	(919) 728-2265
LEXINGTON	New Horizons	(606) 277-1234			@worldnet.att.net	CARY	Agua Shops Scuba	(919) 465-3483
	entuckiana U/W Explorers Society	(270) 765-0259	GREAT FALLS	Great Northern Scuba	(406) 727-1750			
LOUISVILLE	Kentucky Diving	(502) 897-6481	GREAT FALLS	MammerHeads	(406) 727-1750	CLINTON	Sea Wolf Dive Shop	(910) 592-5708
					(406) 442-4334	DURHAM	Water World Marina	
LOUISVILLE	Louisville Dive	(502) 458-8427	HELENA	Mrs. J's Scuba		GRAHAM	Sunchasers Dive Center	(336) 570-2777
LOUISIANA			KALISPELL	Bighorn Divers	(406) 752-4970	HICKORY	Amazing Heroes	
ALEXANDRIA	MammerHeads	(318) 466-9061	MISSOULA	Bicycle Hangar	(406) 728-9537	HICKORY	Seaworld Divers	
ALEXANDRIA	Water Habitat	(318) 443-5075	NEBRASKA					
	Dive Toledo Scuba	(318) 286-5565	OMAHA	Divestar	(402) 391-1155	HIGH POINT	Triad Divers Supply	(336) 886-8808
ANACOCO						JACKSONVILLE	Bottom Time	(919) 347-2826
BATON ROUGE	Dixieland Divers	(225) 261-4320	OMAHA	Heartland Scuba Center	(402) 492-8844	KERNERSVILLE	The Wreck Dive Center	(336) 992-3050
BATON ROUGE	Underwater Adventures	(504) 927-1932	NEUADA			MOREHEAD CITY	Olympus Dive Center	
MARRERO	Aquatic Technology	(309) 452-0222	CARSON CITY	High Desert Divers	(775) 884-3843			
METAIRIE	Aqua Aces Dive Club	(504) 641-7136	HENDERSON	Hoover Dam Divers	(702) 269-0284	WINSTON-SALEM	Blue Dolphin Dive	
						WINTERVILLE	Rum Runner Dive Club	(252) 439-4390
METAIRIE		(504) 888-4882	LAS VEGAS	Blue Seas Scuba Center	(702) 367-2822	NOUA SCOTIA,	CANADA	
METAIRIE	Harry's Dive Shop		CTATE LINE	Sunports	(916) 541-6000			THE RESERVE OF THE PARTY OF THE
THE COUNTY OF THE PARTY OF THE	Harry's Dive Shop Scuba Quest	(504) 455-8636	STATE LINE			DARIMOHH	Seascane Atlantic Society	(902) 478-5554
MAINE			NEW BRUNSWICK			DARTMOUTH	Seascape Atlantic Society	(902) 478-5554
MAINE	Scuba Quest	(504) 455-8636	NEW BRUNSWICK	, CANADA		GLACE BAY	NAUI Atlantic Canada	(902) 849-4610
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TO MAKE CORRECTIONS Contact Tangela Gibbs, e-mail: tgibbs@scubadiving.com.

*NOTE Some dive retailers that sell RSD receive copies via wholesale distribution and are not listed here.

DIVE CLUB EVENTS

EVENT Abyss Dive Club 2nd Annual Caribbean FUNRaiser. DATE January 22, 2001. LOCATION Plymouth Meeting, PA. CLUB Abyss Dive Club. CONTACT Carolyn Nickels abyssdiveclub@iname.com

EVENT Ghost Ships Film Festival. DATE March 23-24, 2001. LOCATION Great Lakes, MI. CLUB Great Lake Shipwreck Research Foundation, Inc.. CONTACT Kimm Stabelfeldt (262) 317-2360 kimm.stabelfeldt@

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By John Francis

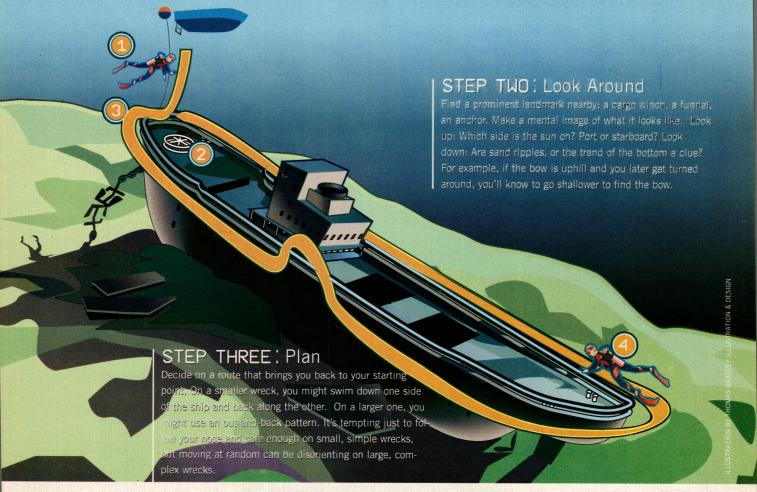


How to Navigate a Wreck

On a Steel Wreck, your compass may be confused. Follow these tips for getting back to the dive boat Safely.

STEP ONE: Stop

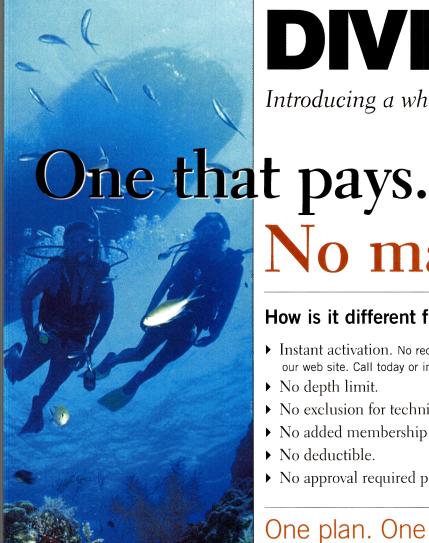
Before you leave the mooring line, pause to orient yourself. Are you at the bow, the stern or in between? Visualize the wreck as a ship, with a pointy and a blunt end, two sides, a top and a bottom. This can be deceptive when wrecks are broken, encrusted or lying on their sides.



Tip: On an out-and-back pattern, stop and look behind you occasionally so you can see what landmarks will look like on your return trip.

STEP FOUR: Follow Landmarks

Usually, the ship's railings, or the edges between the sides and the deck, make good routes to follow. Otherwise, go from point-to-point rather than just swimming in a general direction. Go from cargo boom to mast to hold to bridge to funnel, for example, and remember each as a landmark.



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